NATION

No foul play: Singapore on Zubeen's death

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

India's Russian oil import rebound at 1.8 million bpd

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Tanvi seals maiden medal, Hooda misses out

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 18 OCTOBER 2025 | SATURDAY | BENGALURU | 25 RABI' II, 1447 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 284 | Pages: 8

SALAR UPCLOSE

'NO QUESTION OF REPLACING CM'

NAHEED ATAULLA

Nine time legislator from Haliyal in Uttar Kannada district, Congress veteran RV Deshpande stirred a controversy by mocking his party government's five guarantees recently, saying that they are women-oriented and men have been left in the lurch. A day later he clarified that his remarks were said in jest and he appreciates the work done by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

In an interview with Salar Upclose, Deshpande, who has worked with eight chief ministers, shares his views on the government's performance, the recommendations made by him as chairman of the Karnataka Administrative Reforms and speculation over change of chief ministership.

>>>More on Page 5

Contractors to stop work over dues

They give govt ultimatum till 1 December

BENGALURU, 17 OCT

The Karnataka State Contractors' Association (KSCA) has threatened to stop working if the State government didn't clear the pending dues worth Rs 33,000 crore by 1 December.

Addressing a press conference on Friday, Association President R Manjunath said that despite repeated appeals over the past two-and-a-half years, the government has failed to clear payments owed to contractors.

"We have waited for two-and-a-half-years; we will wait another 44 days. After that, we will stop all work and approach Rahul Gandhi, AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, and KC Venugopal for intervention," he said.

Manjunath said that the KSCA has met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah several times over the past two years. The body was only given assurance and not money, he alleged.

"Whenever we put pressure they release 10 per cent to 15 per cent of the payment. Now that we are completely pushed to the wall, we have no option but to go on strike," he said.

The KSCA had alleged that corruption had doubled under the Congress government, which had made a slogan out of the "40 per cent corruption" that the Association had alleged against the previous BJP government

"I have said in the letter that the commission has doubled (under the Congress) when it comes to releasing payments," Manjunath said. "Small contractors have reached a point of drinking poison."

He added, "I did not say 40 per cent, 60 per cent, 80 per cent commission".

Siddaramaiah dismissed the claims, asking the body to go to court instead. He claimed that the contractors were being coerced into levelling such allegations.

"Let them go to court," he said.

However, Manjunath dismissed the suggestion, stating, "We will not go to court. We will go on strike."

—Salar News with Agencies

Karnataka State Contractors' Association R Manjunathl and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah **PHOTOS: ANI/PTI**

THE PENDING DUES

The KSCA said the pending dues included: Rs 12,000 crore from the Major Irrigation Department; Rs 9,000 crore from the Public Works Department (PWD); Rs 3,600 crore from the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department; Rs 3,200 crore from the Minor Irrigation Department; Rs 2,000 crore from Urban Development; Rs 1,500 crore from Housing, Rs 800 crore from Labour; and smaller amounts from other departments.

SC seeks Centre's response on rising 'digital arrests'

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

The Supreme Court sought the responses of the Centre and the CBI over the rising incidents of online frauds in the country, especially digital arrests to dupe citizens by fabricating judicial orders. The apex court said such offences strike at the "very foundation" of public trust in the system.

The top court took cognisance of a glaring case of digital arrest of a senior citizen couple in Haryana's Ambala on the basis of forged orders of the court and probe agencies by fraudsters to extort Rs 1.05 crore.

A bench of justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi said it is no ordinary crime where it could have asked the police to expedite the probe and take the case to its logical conclusion but a matter where coordinated efforts between the central and state police are required to unearth the full extent of the criminal enterprise.

It flagged the rising number of digital arrest cases across the country and sought the response of the Centre and CBI in the case registered as suo motu after the 73-year-old woman wrote to Chief Justice of India BR Gavai on 21 Sept about the incident of defrauding them using court orders.

- Digital arrests are when fraudsters extort money by posing as officials online. Such act can't be treated as an ordinary offence of cheating or cyber crime, the court said.

Such an act cannot be treated as an ordinary or solitary offence of cheating or cyber crime, the bench observed.

"We are also inclined to take judicial notice of the fact that the instance case is not the sole instance. It has been largely reported many times in the media that such crimes have taken place in different parts of the country," the bench said. *—PTI*

SC orders 'equal policy' for transgenders

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

The Supreme Court on Friday expressed concern over persistent discrimination against transgenders despite the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, and directed the Centre to frame an 'equal opportunity policy' within three months of a report from an advisory panel.

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan said the 2019 Act and 2020 Rules have been "brutally reduced to dead letters" due to grossly apathetic implementation by the Centre and states. They noted that systemic barriers violating Article 21.

The verdict followed a plea by a transgender woman who faced discrimination and dismissal from private schools in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. The court directed the Centre, UP, Gujarat, and one school to pay Rs 50,000 each to the petitioner.

An advisory committee, led by former Delhi High Court judge Asha Menon, will draft recommendations for an equal opportunity policy within six months. The court also directed the creation of welfare boards, protection cells, a nationwide helpline, and gender-inclusive measures in public institutions to safeguard transgender rights. *— PTI*

Vote theft: SIT raids ex-BJP MLA's residence

KALABURAGI, 17 OCT

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) investigating the alleged vote theft in State's Aland assembly constituency conducted raids on properties associated with former BJP MLA Subhash Guttedar and his sons on Friday, according to police sources.

This inquiry was prompted by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's press conference in New Delhi, where he claimed that there was a "systematic" effort to remove over 6,000 names, predominantly from Congress strongholds and minority communities, from the voters' list in Aland prior to the 2023 assembly elections.

In response to these allegations, the Karnataka government established an SIT led by senior IPS officer BK Singh. Reports indicate that three residences linked to former Aland MLA Subhash Guttedar were searched, focusing on his sons, former Zilla Panchayat Vice President Harshanand Guttedar and Santosh Guttedar. Additionally, a Chartered Accountant's residence in Vivekananda Nagar, Kalaburagi city, was also subject to a raid. *—PTI*

- This inquiry was prompted by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's press conference in New Delhi

FSSAI bans misleading 'ORS' labels

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

Phe Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed all food business operators to immediately stop using the term 'ORS' (Oral Rehydration Solution) in product labels and advertisements, calling such usage misleading to consumers and potentially harmful to public understanding of genuine rehydration solutions. In its 14 October order, the food safety regulator clarified that using 'ORS' in trademarked names or product titles, even with a prefix or suffix, violates the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. The order withdraws previous directives from July, 2022 and February, 2024, which had allowed the term on labels provided a declaration stating the product was "not an ORS formula as recommended by WHO." After reviewing the matter, the regulator concluded that such usage misleads consumers through false, deceptive, ambiguous, and erroneous names or label declarations, contravening the law. Use of the term will now be considered misbranded and misleading, making companies liable for legal action under the FSSAI Act. *—PTI*

Official suspended for taking part in Raichur RSS event

BENGALURU, 17 OCT

A Panchayat Development Officer in Raichur district has been suspended for allegedly taking part in the RSS event, sources said on Friday. The officer posted in Sirawar Taluk Panchayat was suspended after he allegedly took part in an RSS event wearing the uniform. The action comes after of the State Cabinet decided to prohibit 'private organisations' in government schools and colleges and public places. *—PTI*

Belgium approves Choksi's extradition

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

The order has come as a strong validation for India's case seeking his extradition, with Choksi having the option of appealing against the decision in a superior court in Belgium, they said.

"The order has come in our favour. The court has termed his arrest by the Belgian authorities on India's request valid.

The first legal step in getting him extradited is now clear," a senior official said.

Belgian prosecutors were aided by Indian officials from the External Affairs Ministry and the CBI in putting forth strong arguments on Choksi's alleged crime in orchestrating a Rs 13,000 crore scam in the Punjab National Bank in collusion with his nephew Nirav Modi.

The prosecutors told the court that he remains a flight risk and cannot be released from prison, the officials added.After hearing the Belgian prosecutors and Choksi's defence lawyers during the hearings in mid-September, the court concluded that his arrest was valid.

Choksi, 66, was arrested in Belgium on 11 April on the basis of the extradition request sent by the CBI. His bail applications have been rejected by different courts in that country.

Choksi had fled to Antigua and Barbuda in the Carribbean where he had taken citizenship. After he was stopped in Belgium, the CBI, the External Affairs Ministry, and the Home Ministry swung into action to get him extradited to India to face the law.

India has also assured the Belgian authorities that if extradited, Choksi would be housed in Barrack No. 12 at the Arthur Road jail in Mumbai, with no chance of overcrowding or solitary confinement, as at least one more economic offender is expected to be housed in his cell.

India has said that the cell in which Choksi will be detained will meet European standards -- sized approximately 20 feet by 15 feet with a separate toilet and washroom, ventilators, and a grilled main door, which provides sufficient air circulation. *—PTI*

- Choksi had fled to Antigua and Barbuda in the Carribbean where he had taken citizenship. After he was stopped in Belgium, the CBI and Home Ministry swung into action to get him extradited to India

BLINDING LIGHTS

The Silk Board junction on Hosur Road was clogged ahead of Deepavali festival in Bengaluru on Friday **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD**

Jadeja's wife made minister in Gujarat Cabinet

GANDHINAGAR, 17 OCT

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Friday inducted 19 fresh faces in his council of ministers and retained six from his previous team, including Harsh Sanghavi who was elevated as Deputy CM, while cricketer Ravindra Jadeja's wife Rivaba too made the cut. Sanghavi is the first DyCM that Patel as appointed in his four-year rule over the state.

Of the 25 ministers now in the council of ministers, nine are of cabinet rank, three MoS with independent charge and 13 MoS.

Rivaba who took oath as a minister of state. Her husband Ravindra and their daughter attended the oath-taking ceremony. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

AFTER SUICIDE CASES

Meta adds parental control for teen-AI chats

NEW YORK, 17 OCT

Meta will introduce parental controls for children's interactions with AI chatbots starting early next year, including the ability to disable one-on-one chats with AI characters. Parents will also be able to block specific chatbots while still allowing others.

However, Meta's AI assistant will remain active to provide helpful information and educational opportunities, with default age-appropriate protections to safeguard teens.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Parents will receive insights into their children's AI conversations, though they will not see full chats.

The announcement comes amid criticism of Meta over potential harms to children, with lawsuits claiming AI interactions have led to serious mental health risks, including suicide. Research by Common Sense Media shows that more than 70 per cent of teens have used AI companions, with half using them regularly.

Earlier, Meta said teen Instagram accounts will default to PG-13 content, restricting exposure to sex, drugs, and dangerous stunts. These restrictions will also apply to AI chats.

Children's online advocacy groups, however, were sceptical.

"From my perspective, these announcements are about two things. They're about forestalling legislation that Meta doesn't want to see, and they're about reassuring parents who are understandably concerned about what's happening on Instagram," said Josh Golin, the executive director of the nonprofit Fairplay. On Tuesday, after the announcement. *— PTI*

Three killed, 20 hurt in Haveri accident

HAVERI, 17 OCT

A tragic accident occurred on National Highway 48 near Kakol village in Ranebennur taluk in Haveri of the State on Thursday night, claiming the lives of three individuals when a Tata Ace collided with a stationary tractor-trailer. The deceased, identified as Chamanasab Kerimattihalli, 65, Mabusab Doddagubbi, 65, and Ningamma Jigaler, 70, all from Malebennur, were returning from a wedding procession. At least 20 others sustained minor injuries and were taken to Ranebennur Taluk Hospital. Police indicated that the lack of rear lights in the trailer contributed to the incident.—*Salar News*

Man kills mother for refusing money for alcohol

BAGALKOTE, 17 OCT

A 28-year-old man, Venkatesh, has been arrested for allegedly murdering his mother, Shavakka Girisagar, 58, after she declined to give him money for alcohol in Tulsigeri village of Bagalkote. Venkatesh, who has been unemployed and addicted to alcohol, reportedly tied up his mother, gagged her, and then slit her throat when she could not provide him with cash. Shavakka had been the sole breadwinner,working as a daily-wage labourer to support them both since the death of her husband, while her daughter lived elsewhere. When neighbours noticed she hadn't appeared outside, they discovered her lying in blood and alerted the police. Venkatesh was found drinking at a nearby bar and is now in police custody.—*Salar News*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

FM opens farmers' training centre in Vijayapura

VIJAYANAGARA, 17 OCT

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday inaugurated a Farmers' Training and Common Facility Centre in Kasapura village, in Vijayanagara district, set up under the MPLAD scheme. The centre, established with support from NABARD, will train farmers and self-help groups through Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) to boost value addition in crops like groundnut and tamarind. Designed to process 400 MT of groundnuts and 200 MT of tamarind annually, the project aims to modernise food processing and enhance rural incomes. Sitharaman said the initiative would help improve product quality, marketing, and export potential. The centre is expected to directly benefit 575 farmers and indirectly support over 1,500 others in the drought-prone Kudligi taluk.—*PTI*

Kidnapped trader found dead near Tungabhadra River

VIJAYANAGAR, 17 OCT

The decomposed body of a trader from Holalu village, was recovered on Thursday from the banks of the Tungabhadra River near Haravi–Basapur, days after his abduction on 10 October. Police arrested two suspects — Mallikarjun Ujjammanavar, 27, and Yogesh Angadi, 25, both from Holalu — in Pune, Maharashtra, and brought them to Karnataka for questioning. Based on their confession, the body of the victim - Manjunath Shejavwadkar, 58 - was found. Investigations revealed that the kidnappers tied Manjunath's hands and legs, sealed his mouth, and locked him in a car trunk, where he died of suffocation. They later dumped the body into the river. The accused had demanded Rs 5 crore ransom from Manjunath's sister via WhatsApp. Police said he was alive until the FIR was filed.—*Salar News*

Are they Gods: CM on Murthys rejecting caste survey

BENGALURU, 17 OCT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah criticised Infosys founder NR Narayana Murthy and author Sudha Murty for not participating in the ongoing social and educational survey. He said that they must have "some misconceptions" about enumeration, popularly known as the caste survey.

"Are the people at Infosys implying they are gods?" he wrote on X.

"There is a notion that this is a survey for backward castes," Siddara maiah had earlier told press. "It is not a backward classes survey. Let them write whatever they want. People should understand what this survey is about. What can I do if they are unable to understand?"

> **The government has already stated that this is not a survey of backward castes. This is a survey that includes all people**
>
> -Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

The Murthys declined to take part in the survey, noting on the pro forma that they do not belong to backward communities.

"Should Infosys (founder) mean 'Brihaspati' (intelligent)? We have said 20 times it's not a backward classes survey but a survey for everyone," Siddaramaiah said.

"Aren't upper-caste women and those above the poverty line availing the Shakti scheme (free bus rides to women)? Aren't upper-caste people among the Gruha Lakshmi beneficiaries (Rs 2,000 a month to women heads of families from economically weaker sections)?" he asked.

The Chief Minister said that despite repeated clarifications from ministers, there were still misconceptions about the exercise of the caste survey among the people of the state.

"Now the Centre is also coming up with a caste census. What answer will they (Murthys) give then? I feel they have the wrong information beacuse of which they objected," he said.

"I am making it very, very clear — this is not a survey for backward classes but a socio-economic and educational survey of seven crore people of Karnataka."

—*Salar News with agencies*

Student arrested for raping senior in college

Ashoka writes to NCW about rising sexual violence in State

BENGALURU, 17 OCT

A female student of a private engineering college in City was allegedly raped by her junior inside the men's washroom on the campus, police said on Friday. The accused, 21, has been arrested on charges of rape and produced before a court, which remanded him to judicial custody, they added.

In her complaint, the woman stated that the incident took place on 10 Oct at BMS College of Engineering in Basavanagudi area, where they both were studying, police said. During the lunch break, he allegedly called her multiple times, asking her to meet him near the architecture block on the seventh floor.

When she met him there, he allegedly forcibly kissed her. She attempted to leave in the lift, but he followed her to the sixth floor where he pulled her into the men's washroom, locked the door, and raped her, she alleged.

During the assault, the accused allegedly took away her phone when one of her friends tried to call her.

Later, the accused allegedly called her, asking if she needed a pill. She cut the call.

Though initially hesitant and afraid, she narrated her ordeal to her parents, following which a complaint was filed at the Hanumanthanagar police station on 15 October.

"My friends supported me, after which I informed my parents and approached the police seeking action against Jeevan Gowda," she said in her complaint.

Meanwhile, Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly R Ashoka alleged that the law and order situation in the State has collapsed with 979 cases of sexual assaults on girls reported in the past four months, including over 114 in Bengaluru alone.

Ashoka has also written to the chairperson of the National Commission for Women, Vijaya Kishore Rahatkar, seeking her intervention.

"Our women & children are living in fear due to the Congress government's criminal inaction," he said on X.

He said the brutal rape and murder of a tribal girl in Mysuru and the suicide of a librarian in Kalaburagi reflect a moral and administrative failure. —*Agencies*

The accused called the victim later and asked her if she needed an afterpill

During the assault, the accused snatched away the survivor's phone when one of her friends tried to call her **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

AMID 'RSS BAN' CALL

Yatnal asks CM to ban namaz on roads

BENGALURU, 17 OCT

Vijayapura MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to ban namaz on roads, footpaths, and government premises without prior permission

His demand comes a day after the State Cabinet decided to frame rules, reportedly aimed at checking RSS activities, including marching on roads and holding events in public places and government premises.

In a letter to Siddaramaiah, Yatnal wrote, "We have seen people offering namaz on public roads and government premises without obtaining due permission from the competent authorities".

"Such activities cause obstruction to vehicular and pedestrian movement, inconvenience the public, and endanger pedestrians, thereby violating the citizens' fundamental rights to free movement and safety guaranteed under Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India," it further said.

He argued that there should not be any special provision to offer namaz in government offices or other government-aided institutions.

"Permitting such practices while restricting other organisational activities on public property amounts to selective enforcement and undermines the credibility of governance," Yatnal said.

NSUI members protest against RSS to show their support for Minister Priyank Kharge **PHOTO: SALAR**

CM: NOT JUST ABOUT RSS

Meanwhile, Siddaramaiah said that the Cabinet's decision was "not just about RSS".

"Any organisation conducting activities without government permission is not allowed. This rule was actually brought in by the BJP under Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar," he said.

In 2013, the Shettar-led government had issued a circular, restricting the use of school premises and attached playgrounds for educational purposes only. —*Agencies*

Ex-SC judge to head Leh violence probe

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has initiated a probe into the violent incidents that occurred in Leh on 24 September, resulting in the deaths of four individuals and numerous injuries. The inquiry will be led by retired Supreme Court judge Dr Justice BS Chauhan, who has been tasked with investigating the circumstances that led to this serious law and order situation as well as the police response.

An official statement from the MHA noted, "In order to ensure an impartial inquiry, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, today, notified a judicial inquiry."

The clashes erupted between security forces and protesters advocating for statehood and Sixth Schedule status for Ladakh, culminating in police action that resulted in four deaths and around 90 injuries.

PROHIBITORY ORDERS

Two days after lifting restrictions, the government reimposed probitory orders in Leh, citing fears of disturbance to public peace and tranquillity and the possibility of a law and order breakdown due to the Leh Apex Body's call for a two-hour silent march and a three-hour blackout in Ladakh on 18 Oct. —*PTI*

AGAINST 'VOTE THEFT'

AICC Secretary Mansoor Ali Khan takes part in the signature campaign against 'vote theft' at CV Raman Nagar in the City on Friday **PIC: SALAR**

2 arrested for college student's murder

KOLAR, 17 OCT

A day after a 20-year-old college student was found murdered with her throat slit near a railway track here, police arrested two men in connection with the killing on Friday.

The main accused, Vignesh a neighbour of the victim, allegedly killed her out of anger and frustration after she rejected his marriage proposal, police said.

The incident occurred on 16 October, when Yamini Priya, a first-year pharmacy student and resident of Swatantra Palya, was returning home from college.

Vignesh approached her and insisted that she marry him. When she refused, he allegedly attacked her with a sharp weapon, causing fatal injuries.

Based on a complaint filed by the victim's father, a murder case was registered at the Shrirampura Police Station.

According to the complaint, the accused, who lived opposite their house and was known to the family, had been repeatedly pressuring the victim to marry him.

Following investigations in the case, the police arrested Vignesh and another man who allegedly sheltered him after he committed the crime.

The police also seized the two-wheeler used by the accused during the crime, a senior officer said.

The police are investigation the incident and questioning people. —*PTI*

I am not Modi who fails: CM at Mysuru job fair

MYSURU, 17 OCT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah kicked off the "Mega Job Fair and Yuva Samruddhi Sammelana" in Mysuru by declaring that "I am not Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who fails to keep his promises".

"Modi promised to create 2 crore jobs annually but failed to deliver," he said on Friday. "Over these 11 years, a total of 22 crore jobs should have been created."

Noting that the State Congress government had hosted job fairs in Bengaluru, he said, "58,892 job aspirants have participated and benefited by gaining opportunities and knowledge. Of these, 11,507 candidates have received appointment letters, and 22,819 candidates have been shortlisted for the final stage."

CM Siddaramaiah at the Mega Job Fair and Yuva Samruddhi Sammelana **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

"In job fairs held across districts, 1,20,563 candidates participated, 24,391 candidates got appointments letters and 48,232 candidates were selected for the final round," he further said. —*Salar News*

KOLAR OBSERVES BANDH OVER CJI SHOE-THROWING INCIDENT

KOLAR, 17 OCT

Many parts of Kolar district observed a peaceful partial bandh on Friday, protesting the throwing of a shoe at the Chief Justice of India by an advocate recently. The call for the bandh was given by several progressive organisations, including Dalit Sangarsha Samithi (DSS), Janavadi Mahila Sanghatane, Karnataka Vimochana Ranga, and other organisations.

Most businesses in Kolar, KGF, Srinivasapur, Bangarpet, and Mulbagal remained closed, while autorickshaws and private buses ran almost normally. Schools and colleges stayed closed as a precaution. Early in the morning, KSRTC attempted to run buses, but agitators led by DSS leader T Vijayakumar prevented services.

Some merchants, including flower and grocery sellers, operated with half shutters, and roadside eateries did brisk business, while regular hotels remained closed. In minority-dominated areas shops were shut.— *Salar News*

CONG GOVT TROLLED

Shakti Scheme gets 'fake' world record

BENGALURU, 17 OCT

The Siddaramaiah-led government is facing scrutiny after it was reportedly issued a fake certificate from the 'London Book of World Records' for its Shakti scheme, which offers free bus rides to women in the state. The BJP and JD(S) have criticised the move. The Chief Minister's Office (CMO) is reportedly looking into the incident.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had announced three days ago on X that the scheme received recognition for the highest number of free bus rides availed by women. Screenshots shared by BJP MLC CT Ravi indicate that the certificate can be purchased, with 'Award Plans' ranging from Rs 4,000 to Rs 10,000.

JD(S) noted that the world records body was dissolved on 15 July, 2025. Ravi posted on X: "Not only is the certificate fake. It has a rate card to buy. How low can you go to fool people?"

The fake certificate of London Book of World Records **PHOTO: X/SIDDARAMIAH**

The certificate bears signatures of Avinash D Sakunde, International Chairman, and Dr Ivan Gacina, EU Head, Republic of Croatia.

"A BIG embarrassment for Congress," said BJP IT Wing in-charge Amit Malviya. "Someone literally conned the Congress! The so-called "certificate" is full of spelling and grammatical errors. Worse, the company was dissolved in July 2025, and the page is now apparently being run from Chuna Mandi, Paharganj, Delhi — under the name London Book of World Records! Only the Congress could fall for this level of scam within a scam."

However, the The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) hit back, stating that 500 crore free tickets were issued to women passengers, which is a world record.

"And, KSRTC (from 1997 to September 2025), with the distinction of being the public road transport corporation that has received the highest number of awards, has been included in two world records — Golden Book of World Records and London Book of World Records," the statement said.

The KSRTC also shared pictures of Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, and Bollywood actors receiving 'London Book of World Records'. — *PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

RJD leader Sarfaraz Alam joins Jan Suraaj Party

PATNA, 17 OCT

Former Lok Sabha MP and four-time MLA Sarfaraz Alam has joined the Jan Suraaj Party after resigning from the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). Alam, son of late RJD leader Tasleem Uddin, said he "was feeling suffocated" in his old party and wanted to continue his father's legacy of fighting the people of Seemanchal. "I salute Jan Suraaj, which, under the vision of founder Prashant Kishor, has resolved to change Bihar," he said after joining the party on Thursday. The party would allow him to carry forward his father's legacy to fight for the people of Seemanchal, Alam said. Kishor accused both the NDA and the INDIA bloc of "selling seats" at exorbitant prices. —*PTI*

Egypt's Foreign Minister Abdelatty meets Modi

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday expressed deep appreciation for Egypt's President Abdelfattah Elsisi for his role in the Gaza Peace Agreement. Modi conveyed his appreciation for Al Sisi during a meeting with Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, who called on him. "Pleased to receive Foreign Minister of Egypt, Dr Badr Abdelatty. Conveyed deep appreciation for my friend, President Sisi for his crucial role in the Gaza Peace Agreement," Modi said in a post on X. "India-Egypt Strategic Partnership continues to grow from strength to strength for the benefit of our people, our shared region and the humanity," he said. —*PTI*

Christian body moves Kerala HC over 'Haal' movie

KOCHI, 16 OCT

The Catholic Congress, a laity body under the Syro-Malabar Church, told the Kerala High Court on Friday that the upcoming Malayalam film 'Haal' starring Shine Nigam contains "objectionable content" that could spark "religious disharmony." The group sought impleadment in a plea by the film's producers alleging delays by the censor board in issuing a certificate. The court listed the matter for 21 October. The Catholic Congress claimed the film depicted the Thamarassery Bishop House without permission and promoted the notion of "Love Jihad," portraying the bishop as a supporter. The Central Board of Film Certification granted an 'A' certificate but ordered removal of several scenes, citing religious sensitivities and socio-cultural issues, and asked producer Juby Thomas to make the recommended edits before the certificate is finalised. —*PTI*

SC tells TN told to await Presidential Reference judgment

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

The Supreme Court on Friday told the Tamil Nadu government to await the outcome of the Presidential Reference before pursuing its plea challenging Governor RN Ravi's decision to refer the TN Physical Education and Sports University (Amendment) Bill, 2025, to the President instead of granting assent. A bench of Chief Justice BR Gavai and K Vinod Chandran said the matter will be heard after the Constitution bench delivers its judgment. The reference must be decided before Gavai's retirement on 21 November. The state claims the Governor's act is "patently unconstitutional," while Solicitor General Tushar Mehta cited 381 references by governors nationwide between 2015-2025. The court reserved its verdict on the reference on 11 September. —*PTI*

Shah slams RJD's govt job promise for all

Union Minister takes a swipe at party for giving a ticket to Shahabuddin's son Osama Shahab

PATNA/SARAN, 17 OCT

Union Home Minister Amit Shah made a no-holds-barred attack on the Lalu Prasad-led RJD for "making a misleading promise" of providing a government job to every family in poll-bound Bihar and giving a ticket to late gangster-turned-politician Mohammad Shahabuddin's son, Osama Shahab.

Shah, who is in the state on a three-day trip, met Chief Minister Nitish Kumar in the morning, addressed a public rally in Saran district in the afternoon, and delivered a speech at a gathering of intellectuals in Patna in the evening.

Criticising the RJD's poll promise of a government job to every family in the state, Shah sought to know from where the funds would be generated to pay the salaries.

"There are 2.8 crore families in Bihar. Approximately 20 lakh people have government jobs. Now, Tejashwi Yadav has promised that he will give government jobs to 2.6 crore families. But to provide so many jobs, Rs 12 lakh crore is needed, which is four times the budget of Bihar," he claimed, addressing the gathering of intellectuals.

"This is a completely baseless and misleading promise to get votes. From where will the money come to pay the salaries?" he asked.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a meeting with Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, in Patna, Bihar. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and DyCM Samrat Choudhary are also seen PHOTO: PTI

At the rally in Saran, which was once the stronghold of Prasad, Shah took a swipe at the RJD for giving a ticket to Shahabuddin's son, asking how it can ensure the security of the people if it fields such candidates.

"I just saw the list of RJD candidates for the upcoming polls.

The name of Shahabuddin's son is on the list. You tell me, if RJD gives a ticket to Shahabuddin's son, how can Bihar remain safe? You people need to remain alert about parties like RJD," he told the rally. —*PTI*

3 CANDIDATES FILE PAPERS

Mangal Pandey, Bihar Health Minister

Pandey's assets: Rs 2.34 cr

Wife's assets: Rs 95.84 lakh

Maithili Thakur, Singer

Estimated total assets: Rs 4 cr

Khesari Lal Yadav, Actor

Estimated net worth Rs 18-20 cr

BACHHWARA CONSTITUENCY TO SEE A FRIENDLY CONTEST FOR INDIA BLOC

PATNA, 17 OCT

In Bihar's Begusarai district, the Bachhwara constituency could witness a friendly contest among INDIA bloc allies, after Congress fielded youth wing leader Prakash Garib Das, while former CPI MLA Awadesh Roy also filed his nomination. Congress sources said talks with alliance partners, including the RJD and the Left, are ongoing, and Roy may eventually withdraw.

On Thursday, Congress announced its first list of 48 candidates for the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections, including sitting MLAs Rajesh Ram (Kutumba) and CLP leader Shakeel Ahmad Khan (Kadwa), even before finalising seat-sharing arrangements with Mahagathbandhan partners. Sources indicated the RJD has agreed to Congress' demand for 61 seats, with discussions continuing over key constituencies.

The last date for filing nominations is 17 October for the first phase and 20 October for the second.

BIHAR DYCM'S AFFIDAVIT RAISES AGE AND EDUCATION CONCERNS

PATNA, 17 OCT

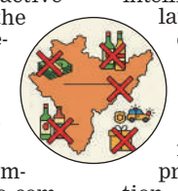
Samrat Choudhary, Bihar's Deputy Chief Minister and BJP candidate for the Tarapur constituency, has declared moveable and immoveable assets exceeding Rs 10 crore in his election affidavit. However, the document raises questions regarding his age and educational qualifications.

Choudhary, contesting for the first time in over a decade, admitted to having two criminal cases pending against him, including one for allegedly breaching prohibitory orders in 2023. He cites his age as 56 years "as per the voters' list," yet no school certificate was attached to his affidavit. JSP founder Prashant Kishor alleged that Choudhary submitted a "fake" certificate to evade trial in a 1995 murder case. Choudhary refers to his highest qualification as a "PFC" from "Kamaraj University," but has clarified its meaning.

EC URGES ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TO PREVENT CASH, LIQUOR MOVEMENT

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

The Election Commission (EC) has called upon enforcement agencies and security forces to adopt proactive measures during the Bihar elections to prevent the use of cash, liquor, and other forms of inducement aimed at influencing voters.



The EC outlined a comprehensive strategy to combat the detrimental impact of financial and material inducements in the electoral process. Various agencies provided updates on their preparedness and proposed actions to ensure inducement-free elections.

The EC highlighted the necessity of cooperation and intelligence sharing among law enforcement agencies at national, state, and district levels to enhance effectiveness. Specific instructions were issued to map constituencies prone to the transportation of smuggled goods, drugs, liquor, cash, and counterfeit currency, particularly along inter-state and international borders, especially given the border with Nepal.

Naveen Yadav files nomination for Jubilee Hills bypoll

HYDERABAD, 17 OCT

Congress candidate Naveen Yadav filed his nomination on Friday for the upcoming Jubilee Hills Assembly bypoll.

Yadav, 41, had previously contested the 2014 Telangana Assembly elections on behalf of the Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM and ran as an independent in 2018. He joined the Congress in 2023.

The high-stakes bypoll in the Jubilee Hills constituency is scheduled for 11 November, with counting of votes on 14 November.

The bypoll was necessitated by the death of BRS MLA Maganti Gopinath in June this year due to a heart attack.

The BRS has fielded Maganti Sunitha, Gopinath's widow, while the BJP has nominated Lankala Deepak Reddy.

Owaisi said that his party would not contest the bypoll as BRS has failed to develop the constituency.

AAP candidate files nomination for Tarn Taran

Meanwhile, AAP candidate Harmeet Singh Sandhu also filed his nomination papers for the Tarn Taran assembly bypoll in Punjab. The seat fell vacant following the death of AAP MLA Kashmir Singh Sohal in June.

BJP candidate files nomination for Ghatsila

BJP candidate Babulal Soren also filed his nomination papers for the bypoll to Ghatsila assembly constituency in Jharkhand's East Singhbhum district. —*PTI*

Gujarat Cabinet introduces 19 new faces

GANDHINAGAR, 17 OCT

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Friday inducted 19 fresh faces in his council of ministers and retained six from his previous team, including Harsh Sanghavi who was elevated as Deputy CM, while cricketer Ravindra Jadeja's wife Rivaba too made the cut.

With this rejig, the total strength of the council of ministers has now gone up to 26, including the CM, from 17 earlier. Gujarat, which has a 182-member assembly, can have a maximum of 27 ministers (15 per cent of the strength of the House). The cabinet restructuring took place two years before the state assembly elections in 2027 and months ahead of the local bodies polls.

Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat administered the oath of office and secrecy to all new ministers and to those who were elevated to the cabinet rank or given the minister of state (MoS) independent charge.

MLA Rivaba Jadeja, wife of cricketer Ravindra Jadeja, takes oath during the swearing-in ceremony of the new Gujarat Cabinet, in Gandhinagar, Gujarat on Friday PHOTO: PTI

Sanghavi, MLA from Majura constituency in Surat who held the position of Minister of State for Home in the previous cabinet, rose to the number two position of deputy CM.

Jitu Vaghani, Arjun Modhwadia and Manisha Vakil are some of the MLAs who will serve as ministers. Of the 25 ministers now in the council of ministers, nine are of cabinet rank, three MoS with independent charge and 13 MoS. Three women are now part of council of ministers as against one earlier. —*PTI*

TVK NOT A RECOGNISED PARTY, EC TO HC

CHENNAI, 17 OCT

The Election Commission of India (EC) has informed the Madras High Court that actor Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) is not a recognised political party. EC counsel Niranjan Rajagopal made the submission during the hearing of a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by C Selvakumar.

The PIL, filed following the tragic Karur rally stampede on 27 September that killed 41 people, sought the derecognition of TVK, alleging the party unlawfully mobilised women and minors at its events. Rajagopal argued that since TVK is unrecognised, the plea for derecognition cannot be entertained, as derecognition applies only to registered political parties.

The Madras High Court directed that all matters relating to the stampede be placed before the administrative side to constitute a dedicated bench to handle these cases, excluding those already pending before the Supreme Court.

The bench noted that the Supreme Court's CBI probe order would effectively address the petitioner's prayer to alter the FIR against Vijay.

Selvakumar also requested that the EC strictly enforce prohibitions on using children and women in political rallies and campaigns across the state, in line with its February, 2024 directive. —*PTI*

UP lynching: RaGa meets victim's kin

KANPUR, 17 OCT

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday said the brutal murder of Dalit villager Hariom Valmiki in Raebareli has "shaken the conscience" of the entire nation, and accused the administration of trying to intimidate the victim's family.

Gandhi, who met with the family of the deceased in Fatehpur in Uttar Pradesh, also charged that authorities tried to stop the family from meeting him.

He said the BJP government must ensure the harshest punishment for the culprits. Gandhi spent about 25 minutes with the family.

"Dalit oppression is at its peak under this government," Gandhi said referring to the alleged suicide by Haryana IPS officer Y Puran Kumar.

Ahead of Gandhi's visit, the victim's brother Shivam Valmiki allegedly released a video in with the family purportedly stated that the former should not use the visit for political purposes. —*PTI*

LoP in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi meets the family members of late Hariom Valmiki, a Dalit man allegedly lynched in Raebareli PHOTO: PTI

T'gana Cabinet lifts 2-child cap for local polls

HYDERABAD, 17 OCT

The Telangana Cabinet has decided in principle to lift the disqualification rule preventing candidates with more than two children from contesting local body elections. This announcement was made during a media briefing after a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy.

Revenue Minister P Srinivas Reddy stated, "The cabinet rethought about lifting the ban on candidates with more than two children to contest in the local body polls. At a time when population control measures are strictly being implemented, the two children ban need not be enforced. These kinds of opinions were expressed in the cabinet meeting. So, accordingly, the cabinet in principle agreed to lift the ban."

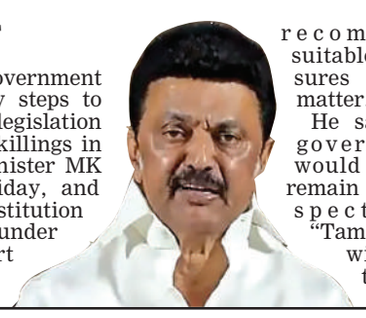
He also noted a record harvest of 1.48 crore metric tonnes of paddy in the Kharif season, with expectations of 80 lakh tonnes reaching procurement centres. —*PTI*

'WON'T REMAIN SILENT'

TN will enact honour killing prevention law: Stalin

CHENNAI, 17 OCT

The Tamil Nadu government will take necessary steps to enact appropriate legislation to prevent honour killings in the state, Chief Minister MK Stalin said on Friday, and announced the constitution of a commission under retired high court judge KM Basha to recommend suitable measures on the matter.



He said the government would not remain a mute spectator. "Tamil Nadu will lead to bring a special law to prevent honour killings," Stalin said.

The commission, comprising legal experts, progressive thinkers, and anthropologists, will obtain the views from political parties, legal experts, social activists, and affected people, and will make appropriate recommendations on the subject, he said.

"Based on the recommendation, I assure you that the Tamil Nadu government will take necessary steps to enact appropriate legislation with a view to preventing honour killings," Stalin told the Assembly amidst the thumping of desks by DMK members.

Stalin's initiative comes in the wake of a series of honour killings in the state, including the murder of a youth by his father-in-law near Nilakottai in Dindigul district this month, and a Dalit techie allegedly by his girlfriend's brother in Tirunelveli in July.

However, the Chief Minister contended that caste was not the only reason for such killings, and there were other factors. —*PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

School in Delhi receives hoax bomb threat

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

A bomb threat email sent to Vishal Bharti Public School in Paschim Vihar East on Thursday was declared a hoax after police traced it to a student. The school principal alerted police after receiving the message claiming a bomb had been planted. Emergency response teams, including the Bomb Disposal Squad and Fire Department, were deployed, and the building was evacuated. A thorough search found no suspicious object. Investigations later revealed that a juvenile student had sent the email. During questioning, the boy admitted he had made the threat to avoid upcoming examinations and force the school to declare a holiday. Police have apprehended the student and registered a case. *—PTI*

M'rashtra tribal girl forced into marriage, raped

PALGHAR, 17 OCT

A 13-year-old tribal girl in Maharashtra's Palghar district was allegedly forced into marriage and sexually assaulted by her purported husband, police revealed on Friday. The marriage was reportedly arranged by the victim's grandfather in September. The girl told police she was repeatedly raped and mentally harassed by the groom and his parents, prompting her to file a complaint. Police have registered a case against five people, including the husband, his parents from Ahilyanagar, and the girl's relative. Charges have been filed under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and other relevant laws. Authorities are actively investigating the case.*—PTI*

M'rashtra village evacuated after cracks develop

C' SAMBHAJINAGAR, 17 OCT

All 85 families from Kapildharwadi village in Maharashtra's Beed district have been evacuated after deep cracks appeared in the ground earlier this month. The village, about 150 kilometres from Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar and near the Kapildhar waterfall, first saw fissures on October 1, one expanding to nearly six feet wide, officials said. District Collector Vivek Johnson confirmed that around 400 residents have been temporarily moved to a rest house at the Manmath Swami temple. A team from the Geological Survey of India (GSI) has inspected the site to determine the cause. Authorities have identified a new location for permanent resettlement, with relocation procedures already underway. The administration awaits the detailed GSI report before further action.*—PTI*

3 staff of UP institute booked for casteist abuse

BALLIA, 17 OCT

Police has filed an FIR against the Government Industrial Training Institute's principal and two employees for allegedly harassing a Dalit woman employee. A case was registered based on the complaint filed by the husband of a woman employee at the institute. The accused have been identified as principal Amit Kumar Dwivedi, radio instructor Ravindra Singh, and electrical instructor Dhananjay Singh. The complainant's wife, Arun Kumari, was employed as a work manager at the institute. On 14 October 14, Ravindra and Dhananjay allegedly used caste-based abuses when Kumari was at work and "pressured" her to take voluntary retirement. The principal also threatened her with death.*—PTI*

SC upholds property rights of widow under Muslim law

Assets left behind by deceased is part of ancestral property

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

The Supreme Court has said that an agreement to sell a property does not transfer the ownership rights and ruled that all assets left behind by a deceased person form part of ancestral property to be distributed as per Muslim law.

The top court also expressed strong displeasure over the poor quality of English translation of a trial court judgement, stressing that translations must faithfully capture the meaning and spirit of the original text to ensure fair adjudication in appellate proceedings.

The verdict came on a case filed by a woman named Zoharbee against the Bombay High Court verdict.

The case arose from a family dispute over properties left by Chand Khan, who died without children.

His widow Zoharbee claimed three-fourths of the property, contending that it was 'matruka' property under Muslim law.

His brother, Imam Khan, contested the claim, arguing that the properties had already been transferred to third parties during Chand's lifetime through agreements to sell.

The court held that since the sale deeds were executed only after Chand's death, the property continued to vest in him at the time of his demise and must, therefore, be treated as 'matruka' property.

"The property agreed to be sold was, at the relevant time, still the property of Chand Khan and therefore would be subject to division of property as per the applicable law," Justice Karol wrote in the judgement.

Referring to definitions, the bench said the word 'matruka' is derived from Arabic and meant "property left behind by a deceased person" and is subject to devolution according to Muslim law of inheritance. *—PTI*

The widow claimed three-fourths of the property, but her brother-in-law contested the claim *PHOTO: PTI*

COURTS MUST NOT ALWAYS ORDER CBI PROBE: SC

The Supreme Court has cautioned that constitutional courts should not order Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probes as a routine measure. Such directions, it said, must be issued sparingly and only in exceptional cases involving systemic failure or high-level involvement. The bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and Vijay Bishnoi made the observation while overturning an Allahabad High Court order for a CBI inquiry into alleged irregularities in Uttar Pradesh legislative council recruitment, stressing that such power should be used only as a last resort. *—PTI*

SC terms land encroachment in R'than a scam

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

The Supreme Court of India has described the encroachment of lands acquired for the Rajasthan Housing Board as an "absolute rank scam," implicating collusion among officials at all levels. A bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta made the comments while hearing a plea from the Rajasthan government, contesting a High Court order that stayed the state's attempt to regularise illegal colonies established on these lands.

The High Court's 20 August ruling ordered the demolition of any illegal constructions and mandated action against officials responsible for permitting such encroachments. During the hearing, Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati informed the court of approximately 5,000 houses involved in this situation.

"This is a serious thing which the High Court has taken cognisance of," remarked Justice Mehta, who further added, "This is an absolute gospel truth." The bench expressed frustration over the persistent attempts to regularise illegal constructions. *—PTI*

IN SIT CUSTODY

Accused stole 2 kg gold from Sabarimala idol

PATHANAMTHITTA, 17 OCT

The special investigation team (SIT) probing the Sabarimala gold missing case has stated in its remand report that the accused, Unnikrishnan Potty, misappropriated around two kilograms of gold from the Dwarapalaka (guardian deity) idols after sponsoring their electroplating in 2019.

The Judicial First Class Magistrate Court in Ranni on Friday sent Potty to the SIT's custody till 30 October.

As per the report, Potty, who worked as an assistant to the temple priest at Sabarimala between 2004 and 2008, was aware that the copper plates of the Dwarapalaka idols were clad in gold in 1998.

He allegedly filed an application to "repair" the Dwarapalaka idol plates, which contained about two kilograms of gold, in 2019.

The report said that after removing the plates, they were taken to multiple locations, including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and finally to Smart Creations in Ambattur, Chennai.

With the help of Smart Creations, the gold was removed from the gold-clad copper plates and illegally retrieved. To conceal this, only 394.9 grams of gold were replated.

After misappropriating the gold, Potty identified other donors for subsequent gold-plating work, but the donated gold was allegedly not fully used for the intended purpose.

The remand report further revealed that after the 2019 electroplating, the Dwarapalaka plates were taken to several houses and temples in Chennai, Bengaluru, and Kerala for poojas without any security arrangements.

The SIT said it had received information that he might abscond. *—PTI*

- Potty, who worked as an assistant to the temple priest at Sabarimala between 2004 and 2008, was aware that the copper plates of the Dwarapalaka idols were clad in gold in 1998. He filed an application to repair the idol plates.

Man duped with Russian job, forced to fight war

HYDERABAD, 17 OCT

A man from the city, who was offered a job in a construction company in Russia, is trapped on the Russia-Ukraine border and allegedly "forced" to fight in the war after being "duped" by a Mumbai-based agent, his family here said.

Mohammed Ahmed's wife has requested Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to rescue and repatriate her husband.

In a video message, Ahmed said, "The place where I am is border and war is going on. We four Indians refused to go. They threatened us to fight and pointed a weapon at me and another person. ...".

Ahmed's wife said a Mumbai-based consultancy firm offered her husband a job in a construction company in Russia.

Ahmed left India in April 2025 and reached Russia. There was no work for a month, and later her husband, along with 30 others, was shifted to a remote area and given weapons training forcibly.

Ahmed's family members, including his wife, met AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi, who requested the MEA to get Ahmed repatriated from Russia to India.

The Indian Embassy in Moscow said it had shared Ahmed's details with the Russian authorities and requested for ensuring his early discharge from the Russian Army and safe repatriation to India. *—PTI*

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

ENHANCING WARFARE SKILLS

India marked a proud moment on Friday as the first Tejas Mk1A fighter jet, a light combat aircraft manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's (HAL) Nashik plant in Maharashtra, took its maiden flight in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Designed to replace the aging MiG-21 fleet, the Tejas Mk1A features advanced avionics, an indigenously developed AESA radar, a modern electronic warfare suite, and the ability to carry a variety of air-to-air and air-to-ground weapons, making it a versatile combat aircraft for the Indian Air Force *PHOTO: ANI*

Student quits school over Hijab row

KOCHI, 17 OCT

The parents of a Class VIII student at St Rita's Public School in Palluruthy have decided to transfer her to another institution following her distress over being prohibited from wearing a hijab.

The father expressed, "My daughter has been under severe stress after the hijab incident. She clearly said she doesn't want to return, so we decided to respect her wishes."

The family has already reached out to potential schools for admission.

The school, however, remains open to her return if she adheres to its rules. Principal Sister Heleena Alby stated, "If our student returns adhering to the rules and conditions of the school, we are ready to provide her education." Kerala Education Minister V Sivankutty highlighted the irony of a hijab-wearing teacher denying the girl's request. *—PTI*

ED attaches Rs 2,385 cr crypto assets in OctaFX scam case

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

Cryptocurrency worth Rs 2,385 crore has been attached under the anti-money laundering law and the Spanish "mastermind" of the alleged multi-crore OctaFX Ponzi scam has been arrested in that country, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said on Friday.

The case pertains to a "fraud" where several investors were duped on the false promise of high returns through the OctaFX forex trading platform.

A provisional order was issued to attach cryptocurrencies worth Rs 2,385 crore.

The mastermind of the fraud, Pavel Prozorov was arrested based on his involvement in cybercrimes affecting multiple countries.

OctaFX, as per the ED, "systematically duped" Indian investors of Rs 1,875 crore, generating profits of around Rs 800 crore.

The total profits from India are estimated to exceed Rs 5,000 crore, much of which were "illicitly" transferred overseas.

OctaFX operated through a distributed global network to "evade" regulatory scrutiny and layered illicit funds *—PTI*

No foul play: Singapore on Zubeen's death

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

A month after the death of Assamese singer Zubeen Garg in Singapore, authorities say they do not suspect foul play. Garg died on 19 September, allegedly while swimming, a day before he was to perform at the Northeast India Festival.

In a statement, the Singapore Police Force (SPF) urged the public not to spread unverified information. "The case is under investigation under Singapore's Coroners Act 2010. Based on preliminary investigations, SPF does not suspect foul play," it said. Findings will be submitted to the State Coroner for a Coroner's Inquiry, whose conclusions will be made public.

The SPF shared the autopsy report and preliminary findings with the High Commission of India on 1 October.

Meanwhile, SPF will meet the Assam Police SIT team, led by ADGP Munna Gupta, on 21 October. CM Himanta Biswa Sarma assured, "Justice for Zubeen will prevail."

Five accused, including the event organiser and Garg's manager, have been sent to judicial custody. *— ANI*

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

SPEEDY SERVICE

India Post to offer mail, parcel services within 24 & 48 hours

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Friday said India Post will roll out a guarantee-based service of mails and parcels with delivery timelines of 24 hours and 48 hours.

The minister said that 24 hours and 48 hours mail delivery and next-day parcel delivery will start from January, 2026.

"We are going to launch new products with guaranteed delivery of mails and parcels. There will be 24-hour speed post service which will ensure delivery of mails within 24 hours. Similarly, there will be a 48-hour speed post for delivery within 48 hours," Scindia said.

These services will be launched in January, he added.

He said that there will be similar services for next-day delivery of parcels which will ensure that the parcel gets delivered next day from around three to five days at present. The government aims to transform India Post. *—PTI*

Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said that the new delivery service will begin from January, 2026 *PHOTO: ANI*

Modi, Lankan PM discuss welfare of fishermen

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met his Sri Lankan counterpart, Harini Amarasuriya, in New Delhi on Friday during her three-day official visit to India. The two leaders held wide-ranging discussions covering education, development cooperation, women's empowerment, and the welfare of fishermen.

The conversation on fishermen came a day after Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin urged the Prime Minister to raise the Katchatheevu Island issue and the plight of Indian fishermen detained by the Sri Lankan Navy.

Modi said their dialogue underscored the importance of collaboration between the two neighbours for regional prosperity.

PHOTO: PTI

Amarasuriya described the meeting as constructive, noting that both sides agreed to continue talks on safeguarding fishing communities. She also highlighted plans for greater cooperation in education, including institutional partnerships and curriculum reforms.

Earlier in the day, the Sri Lankan leader visited IIT Delhi and a Delhi government school to explore education models, expressing admiration for India's advances in digital learning and innovation. *— Agencies*

210 Naxalites surrender in Chhattisgarh

JAGDALPUR, 17 OCT

In a significant development, 210 Naxalites, including a member of the Central Committee, surrendered to police and paramilitary forces in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh.

Officials revealed that the former insurgents also relinquished 153 firearms, which included 19 AK-47 rifles, along with various other arms. The cohort encompassed individuals from the divisional and area committees.

The tribal leaders welcomed the surrenders warmly, presenting flowers to the former Naxalites. Chhattisgarh's Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and Deputy CM Vijay Sharma, responsible for Home affairs, are set to hold a press conference. The Centre wants to end Naxalism by March 2026*—PTI*

'CM ELECTED FOR 5 YEARS, NO QUESTION OF REPLACING HIM'

NAHEED ATAULLA

Nine time legislator from Haliyal in Uttar Kannada district, Congress veteran RV Deshpande stirred a controversy by mocking his party government's five guarantees recently, saying that they are women-oriented and men have been left in the lurch. A day later he clarified that his remarks were said in jest and he appreciates the work done by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

In an interview with Salar Upclose, Deshpande, who has worked with eight chief ministers, shares his views on the government's performance, the recommendations made by him as chairman of the Karnataka Administrative Reforms and speculation over change of chief ministership.

1. Have the Congress government guarantees benefited only the women and worsened the situation of men, as this was the statement which you reportedly made at an event recently?
I have not made any statement against anybody or the government.

2. Your statement, which you clarified the next day, was that under the guarantees, buses are full of women, they are visiting temples and have Rs 2,000 in hand.
I was talking about how women are empowered now. In the olden days, a woman never stepped out of the house including in big families like ours and they had a limited role to play. Today women have become very active and in some areas they are dominating the men. The Congress party had promised giving Rs 2,000 to the women and the guarantees have focused on them, except the Yuva Nidhi scheme. For the first time, a party like the Congress has focused on women. While the Bharatiya Janata Party speaks a lot, it has done nothing. There's no controversy in my statements.

3.Why is it that most of your statements land you in trouble? In September, a woman journalist had highlighted the problems faced by pregnant women due to the delay in setting up a speciality hospital in Joida in Uttar Kannada district. To this you said that if she has to deliver, you will get it done in your Haliyal constituency.
I had gone to give bagina (offering pooja to a dam when it's full) to Ganeshgudi dam (across Kali river in Uttara Kannada district) and when I was giving it, I called the woman journalist as she is a photographer. I did not speak anything and went to the Inspection Bungalow soon after. I was hardly there for five to 10 minutes. Something which was not discussed was reported. I refuted reports about me having said it. Now whatever I am saying is being recorded. But when there's a situation where in good faith I would have said something on or off the record, it's made into an issue. After all, trust is also important.

4.As a senior Congress leader, do you think the Congress guarantees help the party return to power in 2023 or was the anti-incumbency of the BJP government adequate?
To be honest, these guarantees have 100 per cent helped and now many other political parties have also started following it, under different names. These guarantees have really paid rich dividends to the Congress party. No doubt our manifesto and our commitments were there along with good governance from 2013 to 2018.

5. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will be completing two-and-a-half years in November, how do you rate the performance of his governance and government? Was his 2013-2018 tenure as CM better or this one?
Siddaramaiah is a very seasoned leader and he knows his job well. He was the CM for five years earlier and therefore it's easier for him now to deal with any situation than during his earlier tenure. No doubt his tenure from 2013 to 2018 was excellent. He is definitely doing a good job even now. What happens is when one is doing good work, expectations from that person also go up.

6. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also has completed three terms, but he doesn't seem to be facing issues that Siddaramaiah is facing now in the party.
Siddaramaiah is also not facing any problems within the Congress party. But the Opposition parties rake up some issues every day.

7. Have the corruption charges, internal bickerings in the party, confusion over the ongoing socio-educational survey and speculation over a change of chief minister impacted the party's image?
No. There is no speculation that Siddaramaiah will be changed or that somebody else will come. Regarding the government, it's functioning. The government is pro-poor, pro-women and pro-development. People's expectations are high today and sometimes it is difficult for any government to meet the expectations. It's a smooth running government without any hurdles.

8. So, there will be no change of leadership and Siddaramaiah will complete his full term of five years?
I made this statement two months ago that Siddaramaiah will complete his full term. The Congress legislature party has elected Siddaramaiah as the Chief Minister and when we elected him, there was no time frame that he will be CM only for two years or two-and-a-half years. I don't think there is any talk about this in the Congress high command also.

Check out the full interview on Salar Youtube.

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>
> -RV Deshpande, former minister and senior Congress MLA

9.You are debunking the speculations about any agreement over power sharing?
The high command has not discussed the issue of leadership change with the legislators' or anybody else. I was not a party to all these things. But what you read or I read in the media is all that I know. The speculation, with all due respect to the media, is their creation. From where they get the news, don't ask me.

10. In case there is a change of leadership, you had talked of being tired of ministership since you have served as industries minister for 13 years and now it's time you became the CM. If there is a vacancy will you also throw your hat into the ring?
This is a hypothetical question. It will depend upon the situation. Left to me I don't find any change happening and I don't think the question will arise for a leader to be brought in place of Siddaramaiah.

11.What is your opinion on IT minister Priyank Kharge's proposal to the State government to ban the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) from using government spaces for their activities?
I still don't understand what the RSS is doing in common places. If you want to use government premises, permission has to be taken. All these days they might have been taking permission but now the issue is about banning such activities. The government has to reconsider its decision as they would have charged a fee for giving the permission.

12. With regard to the ongoing socio-educational survey and its confusion, was another social survey required though the earlier one's data was outdated?
The survey is being done to update the records. The survey done earlier, we don't know whether it will stand the test of time. What I found was the questions asked could have been simple. They came to my house in Haliyal and there were some personal questions which are difficult to answer such as details about bank accounts and jewellery one has.

13. As chairman of the Karnataka State Administrative Reforms Commission, you submitted a report and there were 189 recommendations. One of the major ones was setting up a temple task committee which could manage crowd control, distribution of prasad and emergency responses. Have those recommendations been implemented?
Eight reports have been submitted to the Chief Minister and the Cabinet accepted many recommendations. The ninth report is also ready. In the next three or four days, the CM has given us time to submit it. (The ninth report was submitted to the government on Thursday after this interview).

14. You joined the Congress in 1999 and you have been seeing the Congress high command since then. Has the Congress high command, which was strong, becoming weaker now?
I was in the Congress from 1971 and later joined the Janata Party. The high command has never been weak. Today also it is strong and respected and ultimately its decisions when it comes to leadership matters. Observers are sent to elicit feedback and whatever opinion comes from the high command is implemented by the legislature party.

15. Who makes a better leader according to you, Priyanka Gandhi or Rahul Gandhi?
Rahul Gandhi has now been focused as a leader. He's a very nice person. I know him well. He has come to my constituency, my institute and is very helpful. He is a nice human being, who wants to do a lot of good. Priyanka is also very active.
Ultimately, Rahul Gandhi is becoming more important in the party as party leader Sonia Gandhi is not as active as she was earlier.

16. If there is a cabinet reshuffle, are you an aspirant for a berth?
It all depends upon the high command of the party and the Chief Minister. I am a disciplined soldier of the party and I have been in responsible positions as Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president. I have to function myself in a disciplined manner at all times. —*Salar News*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

With 83% buildings destroyed, Gaza needs much to rebuild

The Gaza Strip is a tortured piece of land that is about 40km long and 11km wide. Some 2.3 million souls are crammed into a space of around 360 square kilometres. This is barely larger than central Sydney.

People and empires have lived in, built on, fought over and destroyed the area for thousands of years.

THE DIRE SITUATION IN GAZA

The consequences of the Israel-Palestine war have been catastrophic.

The human toll is immense: the United Nations estimates more than 67,000 Palestinians have been killed and almost 170,000 wounded. About 1,200 Israelis have been killed and 5,400 injured since 7 October, 2023.

Gaza itself has been razed to the ground in many areas. The United Nations estimates that 83 per cent of all structures and housing units have been damaged in Gaza City.

The ability of Gaza to support life is in question.

The recent ceasefire could see a longer-term peace. At the time of writing, it continues to hold, but optimism is not high.

If peace is to hold in the long term, there is a need to look into reestablishing the means by which Gaza can sustain its population.

PRIORITIES IN REBUILDING GAZA

Gaza is a disaster zone. Infrastructure has been dramatically impacted.

The damage is similar in scale and scope to a Category 4 or 5 hurricane.

Like any disaster, food, medicine and bottled water are the immediate priorities. This will sustain life in the short term.

Assuming a major effort can be made to open border crossings, lives will be saved by bringing immediate relief to victims of food and medical supply shortages.

Engineers will be a key resource in reconstructing Gaza.

After sustained bombing, priorities will be reconstituting buried assets such as power, water and sewerage, and pumping stations. While the original lines of buried pipes will be known from city mapping, much of the infrastructure will be cracked, broken or destroyed.

Failure to do so will lead to outbreaks of diseases such as typhus and dysentery.

Unexploded bombs and ammunition will need clearance.

Damaged houses and public buildings will present huge public safety risks of collapse.

Massive demolition and clearance will be required for millions of tonnes of debris.

Following these immediate priorities will be the construction or repair of hospitals, houses, schools, road systems and governance infrastructure – all of which will have been massively compromised.

A DAULTING CHALLENGE

Realistically, it will take decades to design, finance and reconstruct infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. Emergency fixes can be made in the short term (3–6 months), but winter could exact a further toll if delays occur.

Demolition requires specialist equipment and heavy goods vehicles. The needed work is daunting.

Just up the coast, Beirut is facing the problem of what to do with 32 million tonnes of demolition waste from the latest Israel-Lebanon conflict, not long after rebuilding from its civil war.

Gaza may face a similar dilemma, considering how much demolition waste there is on the ground.

It is likely a housing prefabrication scheme, and a massive logistical effort will be needed at least.

Historical precedents outline the scale of the rebuilding task: Stalingrad took more than 20 years to reconstitute after World War II, and Warsaw did not finish postwar reconstruction until the 1980s.

POWER, FUEL AND WATER ISSUES

Creating a future Gaza is dependent on funding and access to resources.

This is more than just money – it will need materials, skills and labour on the ground.

It requires a sustainable peace, a disentanglement of existing infrastructure and a creation of new options for supply.

All critical supplies and infrastructure are not under the control of its government: power, fuel and water currently come from Israel.

Logistically, aid agencies are on the ground to maintain some services. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is foremost among these. It is a program mandated to provide basic humanitarian assistance and services to Palestinian refugees.

In September, UNWRA provided access to 18 million litres of water to 370,000 people in Gaza, as well as removing 4,000 tonnes of solid waste.

This implies 3 billion litres of water – equivalent to filling around 1,200 Olympic swimming pools annually – and removing in excess of 600,000 tonnes of waste every year as a minimum requirement to sustain the Gazan society.

Any engineering solution will need to provide this level of support if not substantially more. This is a huge commitment for funders and engineers.

New port infrastructure needs to be developed as a priority. Supply infrastructure, such as roads and ports, independent of outside controls, will be essential to sustain any society in a post-war setting.

Potentially, much of the demolition waste from Gaza's damaged buildings could be used to reclaim land from the sea and provide breakwaters for this.

However, this waste is heavily contaminated, creating further problems.

A CHALLENGING FUTURE

To achieve these reconstruction outcomes simultaneously will require billions of dollars in aid over many decades.

Without serious aid coming to the region, the cost of construction materials will inevitably soar, and there will be shortages of engineers and technicians accordingly.

All in all, the undertaking is likely to be a major mobilisation exercise for a number of years, no matter how much money is thrown at it by donors. —*The Conversation*

Palestinians move through debris of destroyed buildings in Gaza City on Friday

PHOTO: PTI

Trump says he won't send US troops to Gaza

U-turn comes after he says will 'kill Hamas'

WASHINGTON, 17 OCT

US President Donald Trump clarified he will not send US troops into Gaza after launching the threat against Hamas.

"It's not going to be us," Trump said on Thursday in an exchange with reporters. "There are people very close, very nearby that will go in and they'll do the trick very easily, but under our auspices."

The US had announced last week that it is sending about 200 troops to Israel to help support and monitor the ceasefire deal in Gaza as part of a team that includes partner nations and non-governmental organisations.

Trump's had previously downplayed the internal violence in the territory. Trump said on Tuesday that Hamas had taken out a couple of gangs that were very bad and had killed a number of gang members. "That didn't bother me much, to be honest with you," he said.

Yet, on Thursday he warned on Truth Social that "we will have no choice but to go in and kill them (Hamas)". He did not say how he would follow through.

But Trump also made clear he had limited patience for the killings that Hamas was carrying out against rival factions inside the devastated territory.

PHOTO: PTI

"They will disarm, and if they don't do so, we will disarm them, and it'll happen quickly and perhaps violently," Trump had earlier said.

The Hamas-run police maintained a high degree of public security after the militants seized power in Gaza 18 years ago, while also cracking down on dissent. But their strength has been hit after Israel's onslaught in Gaza. Powerful local families, including some anti-Hamas factions backed by Israel, stepped into the void. Many are accused of hijacking humanitarian aid, contributing to Gaza's starvation. —*PTI*

Trump faces lawsuit over H-1B fee

WASHINGTON, 17 OCT

The US Chamber of Commerce has sued the Donald Trump administration over its decision to impose a $100,000 fee on new H-1B visa petitions, calling it an 'misguided policy and plainly unlawful' move that threatens American innovation and competitiveness.

Filed in a Columbia district court, the lawsuit challenges the 19 September proclamation titled 'Restriction on Entry of Certain Nonimmigrant Workers,' arguing it violates the Immigration and Nationality Act by overriding Congress's authority on visa regulations.

The Departments of Homeland Security and State, led by Kristi L Noem and Marco Rubio, are named defendants.

Neil Bradley, the Chamber's Executive VP, said the fee hike, from about $3,600 to $100,000, would make it impossible for start-ups and small firms to hire global talent. The proclamation, he said, 'blatantly contravenes' congressional intent and exceeds presidential authority. The Chamber warned it would drive talent abroad and weaken economic and technological edge against global rivals. —*PTI*

Ex-NSA Bolton criminally indicted

GREENBELT, 17 OCT

Former United States National Security Adviser John Bolton was charged on Thursday with mishandling classified records, accused of keeping top-secret material at home and sharing sensitive diary-style notes with family.

The 18-count indictment filed in Maryland alleges Bolton shared over 1,000 pages of intelligence between 2018 and August 2025, including details on foreign adversaries, missile plans, and covert operations. Prosecutors said Iranian-linked hackers later accessed his email containing the material.

Bolton, who served under Trump until 2019, called the case politically driven, while his lawyer Abbe Lowell said the issues had been "resolved years ago." Attorney General Pam Bondi said no one is above the law, warning that any act endangering national security "will be punished." The Justice Department said Bolton's actions were a "disregard for national security protocols." —*PTI*

Mongolia PM ousted within months over feud

BEIJING, 17 OCT

Mongolia's parliament voted to remove PM Zandanshatar Gombojav, deepening a power struggle within the ruling Mongolian People's Party. The move followed his loss in a leadership contest to Amarbayasgalan Dashzegve, who also offered to resign as parliament speaker to "restore his honour." Gombojav's allies accused Dashzegve of coal sector corruption, intensifying the feud. The upheaval comes amid budget negotiations and teacher strikes demanding pay hikes. Defiant, Gombojav said, "We are fighting the theft of the nation's wealth and working to raise salaries for teachers and doctors." Analysts warn the turmoil could unsettle Mongolia's fragile economy and delay critical fiscal reforms. —*PTI*

4 dead, 18 injured in stampede over late Kenya PM

NAIROBI, 17 OCT

Four people have been killed in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, after security forces fired shots and teargas to disperse huge crowds gathered at a stadium where the body of opposition leader Raila Odinga was lying in state. A total of 18 people were injured. Kenyans had turned out in large numbers to mourn Odinga since his death on Wednesday, reflecting the influence the respected statesman had on political life in the East African country. Odinga had died in Kerala. Thousands filled the stadium where Odinga's casket was covered in the national flag for an Anglican Church service. Authorities urged mourners to avoid gatherings that could escalate into violence. *-Agencies*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Japan's ex-PM Murayama passes away at 101

TOKYO, 17 OCT

Former Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, who issued a landmark 1995 apology for Japan's wartime aggression, died at 101 in a hospital in his hometown Oita, southwestern Japan, the Social Democratic Party said. Serving from 1994 to 1996, Murayama's statement marking 50 years since World War II's end expressed "deep remorse and heartfelt apology" to nations affected by Japan's military past. Though faulted for his handling of the Kobe earthquake and Tokyo subway attack, he was respected for confronting history and later urged future leaders to uphold peace through honesty and reconciliation.—*PTI*

PHOTO: FB

Kiss guitarist Ace Frehley dies at 74

LOS ANGELES, 17 OCT

Ace Frehley, the original lead guitarist and founding member of the rock band Kiss, has died aged 74. His agent said Frehley passed away peacefully in Morristown, New Jersey, surrounded by family after a recent fall. Known as "Space Ace," Frehley helped define Kiss' explosive stage style, complete with galactic makeup, pyrotechnics and smoking guitars. Bandmates Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley called him "an irreplaceable rock soldier" who will always remain part of Kiss' legacy. Frehley co-founded the band in 1973 and played on hits such as Rock and Roll All Nite and I Was Made for Lovin' You. His death marks the first among Kiss's four original members.—*PTI*

Afghan fighters display trousers, allegedly of Pakistani soldiers who fled during the clashes **PHOTO: X**

Open to talk over Afghan war: Sharif

ISLAMABAD/ PESHAWAR, 17 OCT

- Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed on to a 48-hour ceasefire starting at 6pm on 15 Oct after deadly clashes along the border risked escalating into a wider conflict.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that Pakistan was ready for dialogue if Afghanistan fulfilled Islamabad's conditions following recent clashes between the two sides, Dawn reported.

Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed on to a 48-hour ceasefire starting at 6pm on 15 Oct after deadly clashes along the border risked escalating into a wider conflict.

While addressing the federal cabinet on Thursday, Sharif said, "The message has been sent that if they want to fulfil our justified conditions through talks, then we are ready. The ball is in their court."

Sharif stated that if the Afghan side was "sincere and serious," it would take the initiative to hold talks.

He added that Pakistan's allied nations, particularly Qatar, were also working to ease the situation.

The Prime Minister expressed hope that the issue would be resolved on a lasting basis, including the elimination of the Fitna al-Khawarij, also known as the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), from Afghan soil. "If this (ceasefire) was only done to buy time then we won't accept it."

PAK SHUTS MORE AFGHAN CAMPS

28 more Afghan refugee camps have been closed down in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, officials said on Friday. Pakistan hosts over 1.7 million registered Afghan refugees, with many more living without documentation. —*Agencies*

Bangladesh fires tear gas at protesters

DHAKA, 17 OCT

Bangladesh police on Friday fired teargas and used batons and sound grenades to disperse protesters gathered near the Parliament after they refused to vacate the area, amid uncertainty over the signing of a joint declaration called the July Charter.

Hundreds of protesters had gathered in front of the stage made for the signing ceremony of the July Charter, demanding state recognition, legal protection and rehabilitation for those injured during the demonstrations that toppled then-prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League regime in August 2024.

Protesters vandalise a bus amid uncertainty over the signing of a joint declaration called the July Charter in Bangladesh **PHOTO: X**

The protesters reportedly entered the Parliament premises by scaling its main gates in the morning before gathering in front of the stage. When members of the security forces tried to prevent them, the protesters sat on chairs reserved for guests and began chanting slogans, bdnews24.com reported.

The protestors vandalised at least two police vehicles, set fire to the temporary reception room and control room and furniture built in front of the MP Building.

The July Charter has been drafted after marathon talks between the interim government-instituted commission and political parties. The charter drafted by the National Consensus Commission incorporated over 80 recommendations for running the country.

Hours before the signing ceremony, the National Consensus Commission, headed by interim-leader Mohammad Yunus, declared that it brought an amendment to a clause of the charter indemnifying the "July fighters" for their role during the uprising. Yunus is scheduled to preside over the signing ceremony on Friday. —*PTI*

JEWISH OUTCRY

A decision to bar supporters of 'Israeli' football club Maccabi Tel Aviv from attending their Europa League match at Aston Villa in Birmingham drew sharp criticism from political leaders and Jewish organisations **PHOTO: AA**

Trump weighs arming Kyiv after Putin call

WASHINGTON, 17 OCT

President Donald Trump will host Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the White House on Friday, signaling he is not ready to approve the sale of long-range missiles Kyiv seeks. The meeting follows Trump's recent lengthy call with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Trump had previously shown openness to providing Tomahawk cruise missiles, which have a range of about 1,600km, despite Putin's warnings that the move could strain US-Russia ties. After Thursday's call, Trump downplayed the prospects of selling the missiles. "We need Tomahawks for the US too," he said. "We have a lot, but we need them. We can't deplete our country."

Zelenskyy contends the missiles could pressure Putin to negotiate, while Putin told Trump they "won't change the battlefield situation but would cause substantial damage to the relationship between our countries," according to adviser Yuri Ushakov.

Trump also announced plans to meet Putin in Budapest, a meeting welcomed by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, and the White House indicated Zelenskyy may join.

The talks spotlight US deliberation over balancing Ukraine's defense needs with broader diplomatic tensions with Russia, amid ongoing debate over supplying weaponry. —*PTI*

1 DEAD, 100 INJURED

Peru's Prez refuses to resign amid deadly Gen Z protests

LIMA, 17 OCT

A protester waves a Peruvian flag during a protest against new President Jose Jeri in Peru, on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Peru's new President José Jerí refused to resign Thursday following the death of protester Eduardo Ruíz during a mass demonstration led by Gen Z activists demanding Jerí's ouster.

About 100 people were injured, including 80 police officers and 10 journalists, authorities said.

"My responsibility is to maintain the stability of the country; that is my responsibility and my commitment," Jerí told reporters after visiting Parliament, where he said he would request powers to combat crime, possibly including a state of emergency.

Prosecutors said Ruíz, 32, a hip-hop singer, was shot during the protest. Video showed him collapsing in a Lima street after a man fleeing from protesters fired a shot. Witnesses claimed the shooter was a plainclothes police officer infiltrating the crowd.

Six journalists were hit by pellets and four more were assaulted by police, according to the National Association of Journalists.

The protests, which began a month ago, initially demanded better pensions and wages for young people, but expanded to broader grievances over crime, corruption, and long-standing government disillusionment.

Jerí, the seventh President in less than a decade, was sworn in on 10 October.

The unrest mirrors a global trend of youth-led demonstrations, with similar protests erupting erupted in Nepal, the Philippines, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, and Morocco.

Many protesters carry black flags featuring the 'One Piece' anime skull symbol, boldy representing generational defiance. —*PTI*

Madagascar's coup leader takes over as President

ANTANANARIVO, 17 OCT

Col. Michael Randrianirina speaks after being sworn in **PHOTO: PTI**

An army colonel who seized power in a military coup was sworn in as Madagascar's new leader Friday in a lightning-fast power grab that ousted president Andry Rajoelina and sent him fleeing from the country into hiding.

Col. Michael Randrianirina, the commander of an elite army unit, took the oath of office to become the new President at a ceremony in the main chamber of the nation's High Constitutional Court and in front of its nine red-robed judges.

His ascent to the presidency came just three days after he announced that the armed forces were taking power.

The United Nations has condemned the military takeover as an unconstitutional change of government but there has been little significant reaction from other countries, including Madagascar's former colonial ruler, France.

The takeover — which came after three weeks of anti-government 'Gen Z' protests— led to Madagascar being suspended from the African Union.

The 50 to 51-year-old colonel, who emerged from relative obscurity to lead the rebellion by his CAPSAT military unit less than a week ago, was briefly imprisoned two years ago for an attempted mutiny.

Rajoelina himself came to power as a transitional leader in 2009 after the military-backed coup. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Rupee falls by 7P, closes at 88.03 against USD

MUMBAI, 17 OCT

The rupee pared initial gains and settled for the day lower by 7 paise at 88.03 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, weighed down by trade tensions and global uncertainties. Forex traders said renewed foreign fund inflows and lower crude oil prices boosted investor sentiment further and restricted the downfall. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened below the 88-mark at 87.91 against the greenback, and touched an intraday high of 87.75. The domestic unit finally settled at 88.03 (provisional), registering a fall of 7 paise from its previous close. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.11 per cent lower at 98.22. —*PTI*

Unfair trade case: AK Capital pays Sebi ₹4.3 crore

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

The AK Capital Group has agreed to pay Rs 4.3 crore to markets regulator SEBI to settle allegations of unfair trade practices in the issuance of Non-convertible Debentures (NCDs). The five group entities also disgorged Rs 76 lakh, plus Rs 56 lakh in interest. The case stemmed from SEBI's probe into the group's involvement in Dewan Housing Finance Ltd's (DHFL) 2018 NCD issue. Investigations found that using a Power of Attorney, the group submitted bids for 14.08 lakh NCDs on behalf of 911 investors and later sold them to ensure profits, allegedly gaining over Rs 26 lakh. The entities settled the case without admitting or denying guilt, leading SEBI to close the proceedings. —*PTI*

'Indian telecom services among top 3 globally'

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

Indian telecom services are among the top three globally and efforts are on to further improve them, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Friday. He said that more stringent norms for monitoring quality of service at cell level has been put in place from 1 October. "It will not be an exaggeration to say that Indian telecom services are among top 3 nations and our efforts are on to improve them further," he said. Telecom regulator Trai has implemented norms that were used to measure quality of services at circle level to cell level. He said that telecom operators have submitted first report based on new norms and discussions are on to resolve issues where their quality of service is not as per the benchmark. —*PTI*

Govt reopens application for ACs, LED till 10 Nov

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

The government has reopened the application window for the PLI scheme for white goods (ACs and LED Lights) till 10 November, according to an official statement released on Friday. The application window for round four, originally open from 15 September to 14 October, has been extended in view of the strong industry response and increasing investment appetite under the Scheme. The PLI scheme for White Goods, launched in April 2021 with a total outlay of Rs 6,238 crore, aims to boost domestic manufacturing, promote component localization, and strengthen India's global competitiveness in the air conditioner and LED lighting sectors. The scheme is to be implemented over a seven-year period, from 2021-22 to 2028-29. —*PTI*

India's Russian oil import rebound at 1.8 million bpd

Imports slid from 2 million bpd in June to 1.6M bpd in Sept

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

Indian refiners said they have not yet been asked by the government to stop Russian oil imports *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

India's crude oil imports from Russia strengthened in the first half of October, reversing a three-month slide in arrivals seen during July-September as refineries were back on full stream to meet festive demand, according to ship tracking data.

Imports from Russia slid from over 2 million barrels per day (bpd) in June to 1.6 million bpd in September.

However, tanker-tracking data for early October suggest a rebound: shipments of Urals and other Russian grades to India have picked up pace, supported by renewed discounts amid slack demand in Western markets and shipping flexibility.

Preliminary data by global trade analytics firm Kpler showed October imports tracking around 1.8 million bpd, an increase of around 250,000 bpd from the previous month (though the current month data is subject to revision). The data pertains to the period prior to US President Donald Trump's 15 October statement claiming Prime Minister Narendra Modi has agreed to stop Russian crude imports. Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, however, said he was not aware of such a phone conversation.

Sumit Ritolia, Lead Research Analyst (Refining & Modelling) at Kpler, believes Trump's statement was more likely pressure tactics linked to trade negotiations rather than a reflection of an imminent policy change.

Indian refiners, too, said they have not yet been asked by the government to stop Russian oil imports.

In the first half of October, Russia continued to enjoy that status. Iraq was the second biggest crude oil supplier to India at around 1.01 million bpd, followed by Saudi Arabia at 8,30,000 bpd. The US has overtaken the UAE to become India's fourth-largest supplier with 647,000 bpd. UAE supplied 394,000 bpd, according to Kpler. In fact, most contracts for deliveries up to early September were finalised six–10 weeks in advance, meaning deals were largely locked in before 31 July. —*PTI*

3RD CONSECUTIVE DAY

Sensex jumps 485 pts, Nifty up by 125 pts

MUMBAI, 17 OCT

Benchmark Sensex spurted by 484 points and Nifty closed at a 52-week high on Friday, extending their winning run to the third consecutive day on buying in blue-chip banking and oil shares and foreign fund inflows.

In a volatile session, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 484.53 points or 0.58 per cent to settle at 83,952.19, a level not seen since June 27. During the day, it surged 704.58 points or 0.84 per cent to 84,172.24.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 124.55 points or 0.49 per cent to settle at a 52-week high of 25,709.85.

Among Sensex firms, Asian Paints jumped the most by 4.18 per cent. Mahindra & Mahindra, Bharti Airtel, ITC, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank and Reliance Industries were also among the gainers.

However, Infosys, HCL Tech, Eternal, Tech Mahindra and Tata Steel were among the laggards.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.49 per cent and midcap index dipped 0.43 per cent.

However, BSE Focused IT, IT, commodities, teck, industrials, metal and services were among the laggards.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,451.37 points or 1.75 per cent, and the Nifty surged 424.5 points or 1.67 per cent.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi settled in the positive territory while Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended lower.

Markets in Europe were trading sharply lower. US markets ended lower on Thursday. On Thursday, the Sensex jumped 862.23 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 83,467.66. The Nifty surged 261.75 points or 1.03 per cent to 25,585.30. —*PTI*

Gold prices hit record ₹1.34L on festive buying

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

Gold prices surged by Rs 3,200 to a record Rs 1,34,800 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, driven by strong festive buying ahead of Dhanteras, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,31,600 in the previous session, while 99.5 per cent purity gold rose to Rs 1,34,200 per 10 grams. Traders said demand picked up sharply as jewellers and stockists built fresh positions before the festive weekend. Dhanteras, considered an auspicious day for buying gold, falls on Saturday, followed by Deepavali on Monday.

Analysts said safe-haven demand amid global uncertainty and central bank buying supported prices.

"Gold extended its winning streak as the weak dollar and the ongoing US government shutdown fuelled safe-haven flows," said Jateen Trivedi, VP, LKP Securities.

Silver prices, however, declined by Rs 7,000 to Rs 1,77,000 per kilogram from Rs 1,84,000 in the previous session. Globally, spot gold eased 0.52 per cent to USD 4,303.73 per ounce after touching a record USD 4,379.29 earlier in the week, while silver slipped 1.32 per cent to USD 53.43.

Analysts said despite minor corrections, gold remains supported by geopolitical tensions, the prolonged US-China trade standoff, and expectations of monetary easing by the US Federal Reserve. —*PTI*

NET PROFIT OF RS 65 CR

Eternal shares fall by 2% after weak Q2 profit

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

Shares of food delivery and quick commerce firm Eternal, which owns the Zomato and Blinkit brands, on Friday ended nearly 2 per cent lower, a day after reporting its second quarter earnings, which failed to cheer investors.

The stock dipped 1.64 per cent to settle at Rs 342.70 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it dropped 4.20 per cent to Rs 333.75.

On the NSE, the stock fell by 1.49 per cent to Rs 342.65 after declining 4.05 per cent to Rs 333.75 during the day. Eternal on Thursday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 65 crore for the second quarter ended September, with the quick commerce business contributing significantly to its revenue growth.

The company, which re-branded itself as Eternal in March, had reported a net profit of Rs 176 crore in the June-September quarter of the last fiscal.

In a regulatory filing, Eternal said the results are not comparable with the corresponding quarter last year on account of the acquisition of Orbgen Technologies Pvt Ltd and Wasteland Entertainment Pvt Ltd, holding the 'movie ticketing' and the 'events' businesses, respectively, from One 97 Communications Ltd, which completed in August 2024. —*PTI*

Wipro shares drop nearly 5% post earnings

Shares of IT services firm Wipro dropped nearly 5 per cent on Friday after its September quarter earnings failed to impress investors. The stock fell 4.63 per cent to Rs 242 on BSE and 4.65 per cent on NSE. Wipro reported a slight rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 3,246.2 Cr, compared with Rs 3,208.8 Cr in the year-ago period. Revenue from operations increased 1.7 per cent to Rs 22,697.3 Cr. Sequentially, profit fell 2.5 per cent, while revenue grew 2.5 per cent. —*PTI*

RBI accepts ₹30,000 cr in govt securities auction

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday announced the successful completion of its latest auction of Government of India securities (G-Secs), accepting the entire Rs 30,000 crore on offer. The auction included the 6.01 per cent GS 2030, with a notified amount of Rs 18,000 crore, and the 7.09 per cent GS 2074, worth Rs 12,000 crore.

The RBI said the cut-off price for the 6.01 per cent GS 2030 was Rs 99.52, implying a yield of 6.1252 per cent, while the 7.09 per cent GS 2074 was cut off at Rs 98.80, yielding 7.1782 per cent.

The entire amount was accepted, with no devolvement on primary dealers.

G-Secs are debt instruments issued by central or state governments to fund expenditure, bridge fiscal gaps, and finance development projects.

They are considered among the safest fixed-income investments. —*PTI*

India's logistics cost may hit single digits soon

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

Union Minister **Nitin Gadkari** on Friday said India's logistics cost is expected to fall to 9 per cent by December, driven by the rapid expansion of expressways and economic corridors. Speaking at the ASSOCHAM Annual Conference 2025, he cited a report by IIT Chennai, IIT Kanpur and IIM Bangalore showing that logistics costs have already declined from 16 per cent to 10 per cent, boosting the competitiveness of Indian industry and exports.

Highlighting India's automobile sector, Gadkari said its size has grown from Rs 14 lakh crore to Rs 22 lakh crore since he took charge, providing jobs to four lakh youths.

He set a target for India to become the world's number one automobile industry within five years.

On energy and agriculture, Gadkari stressed reducing dependence on fossil fuels, which cost India Rs 22 lakh crore annually and contribute significantly to pollution. He highlighted farmers earning an extra Rs 45,000 crore from corn-based ethanol production. —*PTI*

Reliance Consumer H1 revenue hits Rs 10,000 cr

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

Reliance Consumer Products Ltd (RCPL), fast-moving consumer goods business of the Reliance group, on Friday said its gross revenue reached Rs 9,850 crore in the first half of the ongoing fiscal.

In the December quarter, its gross revenue was at Rs 5,400 crore, said RIL CFO V Srikanth during the financial results presentation.

"Our FMCG business has 2X growth on a YOY basis for H1. Q2 was Rs 5,400 crore of top line. So its pretty strong growth," he said.

Srikanth further said main brands of RCPL, including its beverages business Campa and in-house brand Independence, the volume growth is pretty substantial.

General trade contributes almost 75 per cent of sales.

"We are doing a lot of on-the-ground activations to basically for the purpose of brand building and making the push through the trade channel. We have signed up several MOUs for food parks and looking up setting up manufacturing facilities across the length and breadth of the country," he said. Besides, in the personal care, RCPL which had acquired Tamil Nadu-based heritage brand Velvet, will drive our growth.

It has a pretty strong brand recall and customer loyalty.

RCPL is currently getting demerged from Reliance Retail and will become a direct subsidiary of RIL. It is one of the fastest growing companies in the FMCG space, which crossed over Rs 11,000 crore revenue in just three years of inception in FY25.

In the opening remarks, he mentioned that the demerger of RCPL from RRVL is likely by Nov 1, 2025, subject to NCLT order. —*PTI*

MICROSOFT IS 2ND

Global brand value: Samsung ranks 5th, Apple 1st

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

Samsung Electronics has ranked fifth in Interbrand's "Best Global Brands" list for the sixth consecutive year, maintaining its position as the top Asian company among the world's leading brands, according to a report by Pulse, the English service of Maeil Business Newspaper Korea.

The report noted that the company's brand value reached $90.5 billion. Since 2020, Samsung has remained the only Asian company within the global top five brands.

Globally, Apple retained the No. 1 spot, followed by Microsoft, Amazon, and Google. Among Japanese companies, Toyota ranked sixth, Sony 34th, Uniqlo 47th, and Nintendo 53rd. Chinese firms Xiaomi, BYD, and Huawei ranked 81st, 90th, and 96th, respectively.

'Interbrand' assesses corporate brand value each year by analyzing financial performance, the influence of brands on consumer purchase decisions, and overall brand competitiveness.

The consulting firm said that Samsung's strong performance was fueled by its competitiveness in artificial intelligence (AI) across all business divisions, its AI-powered home experience ecosystem, intensive investment in AI-related semiconductors, and customer-centric brand strategies.

Lee Won-jin, head of global marketing at Samsung Electronics, said, "Samsung is committed to ensuring that more customers can experience AI in their everyday lives through open collaboration and continuous innovation. We will keep evolving to deliver diverse values such as health and safety, and become a brand loved by even more people." —*ANI*

IPO boom continues with ₹2.6 lakh crore in pipeline

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

India's booming primary market shows no signs of slowing, with over a dozen companies preparing initial public offerings (IPOs) worth nearly Rs 2.6 lakh crore (USD 28 billion), HDFC Mutual Fund's Fund Manager, Chirag Setalvad said on Friday.

Tata Capital, LG Electronics India, and WeWork India Management have already raised around Rs 30,000 crore. The upcoming IPO line-up includes major names such as PhonePe, ICICI Prudential AMC, Lenskart, Groww, Inox Clean Energy, Pine Labs, and Meesho, among others, reflecting strong investor appetite.

So far this year, 81 companies have been listed, with nearly three dozen debuts in the past two months. This continues the strong momentum from 2024, when 91 issues mobilised Rs 1.6 lakh crore, supported by robust retail participation, a resilient economy, and rising corporate investment.

Setalvad, however, cautioned that not all IPOs have delivered strong returns, noting that about 42 per cent of recent listings remain loss-making. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Anahat Singh reaches Boston Open quarterfinals

NEW DELHI, 17 OCT

Reigning women's national champion Anahat Singh completed a fine win over American Charlotte Sze to progress to the quarterfinals of the Boston Open, a USD 15,000 PSA Challenger event. The world No. 45 and second seed defeated local challenger Sze 11-4, 11-6, 9-11, 11-8 in the round of 16 on Thursday after receiving a first-round bye. The Delhi teenager will next meet Egyptian eighth seed Jana Swaify in the event taking place in Boston. —*PTI*

Naomi Osaka pulls out of Japan Open quarterfinal

OSAKA, 17 OCT

Naomi Osaka pulled out of the Japan Open ahead of her quarterfinal on Friday after the four-time Grand Slam champion failed to recover from a leg injury. The former world number one was tearful after struggling through her last-16 match against defending champion Suzan Lamens in Osaka on Wednesday. Top seed Osaka, who turned 28 this week, was supposed to face Romania's Jaqueline Cristian in the last eight. "We regret to announce that Naomi Osaka has not recovered from a left leg injury sustained during the second round of this tournament and has withdrawn from the quarter-finals scheduled for today," the tournament said on X.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Labuschagne replaces Green in Australia ODI squad

PERTH, 17 OCT

Marnus Labuschagne on Friday replaced injured all-rounder Cameron Green for the three-match ODI series beginning here on Sunday. Green will miss the series due to side soreness, with the selectors not ready to take a chance ahead of the Ashes beginning next month. "Green will complete a short period of rehabilitation and is tracking to return to play in round three of the Sheffield Shield to continue his preparation for the Ashes," Cricket Australia said in a statement, suggesting that Green not playing the ODIs is a precautionary step. His replacement, Labuschagne, was not part of the initial squad.—*PTI*

FIFA announces over 1 million tickets sold for 2026 WC

NEW YORK, 17 OCT

More than 1 million tickets have already been sold for next year's World Cup, FIFA said in its first update on numbers since the official start of sales began earlier this month. The highest demand, as would be expected, was from buyers in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, the three nations that will play host to the tournament. FIFA said people from 212 different countries and territories have already purchased, even though only 28 of the 48 spots in the field have been filled. Rounding out the top-10 countries in terms of tickets purchased already: England, Germany, Brazil, Spain, Colombia, Argentina, and France, in order, FIFA said. The tournament runs from 11 June through 19 July. "As national teams across the globe compete for a place at the historic FIFA World Cup 26, I am thrilled so many football-loving fans also want to be part of this watershed event in North America," FIFA President Gianni said in a release.—*PTI*

Rohit and Kohli to play 2027 ODI WC: Travis Head

ROHIT SHARMA AND VIRAT KOHLI PHOTO: PTI

PERTH, 17 OCT

Hard-hitting Australian opener Travis Head expects the "great white ball" duo of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma to carry on till the 2027 ODI World Cup.

The speculation over their future has been intense, and all eyes will be on the star Indian batters in the ODI series beginning here on Sunday. Speaking to the media alongside India spinner Axar Patel, Head said he would put his money on Rohit and Kohli featuring in the ODI World Cup two years later, even though the upcoming series is expected to be their last in Australia. "Two quality players, two of the great white-ball players. Probably, Virat is the greatest white-ball player. Rohit is probably not far behind. "As someone who opens batting in the same format, I hold a huge regard for Rohit and what he's been able to do. So, I'm sure they will miss them at some stage, but I think they're both going to be 37, aren't they?" said Head while standing alongside Axar. India and Australia play each other frequently across formats, and the players of both teams know each other well, also because of the IPL. However, Head has never had the chance to speak to Rohit about batting, and it is something he hopes to do in the near future.

"It's nice just watching from afar, as someone who similarly plays the game, I think, and having played a lot against him in IPL and a lot of international cricket against him, I feel like he goes the right way about things, he plays the game in the right way. Head was non-committal when asked whether he would play all eight white ball games against India, considering the Ashes are around the corner.

On Cameron Green being ruled out of the India series, Head said it is more of a precautionary measure ahead of the Ashes. —*PTI*

Sakariya, Dodiya help Saurashtra lead over K'taka

Karnataka's Shreyas Gopal grabbed eight wickets

RAJKOT, 17 OCT

Saurashtra's last-wicket pair of Chetan Sakariya and Yuvrajsinh Dodiya waged a grim battle to give their team a crucial four-run first innings lead despite Karnataka leg-spinner Shreyas Gopal grabbing eight wickets in an excellent spell on Day 3 of their Ranji Trophy Elite Group B match, here Friday.

Resuming from their overnight 200 for four, Saurashtra were in danger of conceding the innings lead after slipping to 342 for nine with Shreyas (8/110) doing the bulk of the damage.

But Chetan Sakariya (29, 72 balls) and Yuvrajsinh Dodiya (13 not out, 34 balls) added 34 runs for the 10th wicket as the home side made 376, against Karnataka's 372.

In their second innings, Karnataka were 89 for, leading by 85 runs. Skipper Mayank Agarwal (31) and Devdutt Padikkal (18) are batting at stumps. But Sakariya and Dodiya had other ideas as the last wicket pair stoutly resisted Karnataka bowlers for nearly 16 overs.

Shreyas trapped Sakariya's leg before two balls later to bring curtains down on Saurashtra's innings, but by then, they had done just enough to ensure three points from this contest.

Karnataka: 372 all out and 89/1 in 28 overs (Mayank Agarwal 31 batting, Devdutt Padikkal 18 batting) vs Saurashtra: 376 all out 121.3 overs (Chirag Jani 90, Harvik Desai 41, Arpit Vasavada 58; Shreyas Gopal 8/110).

SHREYAS GOPAL PHOTO: PTI

CHETAN SAKARIYA PHOTO: PTI

RANJI TROPHY

YUVRAJSINH DODIYA PHOTO: PTI

Jharkhand is in sight of an innings win against TN

Jharkhand put themselves in a commanding position and, possibly, in sight of an innings victory after pacer Jatin Pandey marked his first-class debut with an excellent five-for, forcing Tamil Nadu to follow-on in their Ranji Trophy Elite Group A match here on Friday.

At stumps on the third day, hosts Tamil Nadu were in deep trouble at 52 for three in their second innings after being bowled out for 93 in their first essay, thanks to Pandey's 5/35 and his pace bowling colleague Sahil Raj, who also finished with exceptional figures of 4/21 in 13.4 overs. Jharkhand rode on their skipper Ishan Kishan's monumental 173 to pile up 419 all out in their first innings after being 157 for six at one stage on Wednesday.

Badoni gets five-for as Delhi take control

Skipper Ayush Badoni's career-best figures of 5/69, including the prized scalp of Hyderabad captain Tilak Varma, put Delhi in line for a first-innings lead after the third day's play in the opening group D fixture of the Ranji Trophy here on Friday. Replying to Delhi's mammoth first-innings score of 529/4 declared, Hyderabad lost senior batter Rohit Rayudu off the last ball of the day to finish on 400 for 7 at stumps.On the day, Hyderabad batters showed a lot of intent to score 323 runs in the entire day's play, with senior opener Tanmay Agarwal scoring 132 with the help of 15 fours. He added 140 for the second wicket with Gangam Anikethreddy (87).At one point, Hyderabad looked in control with the scorecard reading 205 for 1 before Badoni got into the act with his off-breaks. —*PTI*

IN ROKO'S PRESENCE

Gill will grow as a leader: Axar Patel

PERTH, 17 OCT

The towering presence of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma in the Indian ODI team can only help newly appointed captain Shubman Gill grow as a leader, said left-arm spinner Axar Patel here on Friday.

Following India's second training session ahead of the first ODI on Sunday, Axar said Rohit and Kohli, who have not played for India since the Champions Trophy in March, look sharp as ever.

Gill has succeeded Rohit as ODI captain despite the latter taking India to the Champions Trophy title.

"For Gill, it's perfect, Rohit Bhai and Virat Bhai are there, and along with that, they have been captains, so they can give their input also, so it is very good growth of Gill's captaincy," said Axar in a joint interaction with Australian opener Travis Head.

"What has been good about Gill's captaincy thus far is that he has not been pressurised."

It has been a while since Rohit and Kohli played competitive cricket, but Axar said they are looking as sharp as ever.

"Like Travis said, they both are world-class players. We can see after the first match (how their form is). They are professionals, so they know what to do. They have been practicing in Bangalore's Center of Excellence, so I think they are ready to go. "They are looking very good both in nets and fitness-wise," said the bowling all-rounder, who first visited Australia as an Indian player a decade ago.

We don't talk about bounce of pitches here anymore; we talk about strategy

Most of the Indian cricketers have played plenty of cricket in Australia, including Axar, leaving them in a comfortable space of mind.

Axar said the talk in the dressing room is focused more on planning against the opposition rather than the bouncy nature of tracks, considering their familiarity with the conditions. "I feel that since 2015 (his first visit Down Under), there have been a lot of changes. —*PTI*

SHUBMAN GILL PHOTO: PTI

PL: Man City's Rodri ruled out

LONDON, 17 OCT

Manchester City will be without Ballon d'Or winner Rodri when it hosts Everton in Saturday's Premier League clash at the Etihad Stadium, manager Pep Guardiola confirmed, in a blow to the team's efforts to maintain momentum in the title race.

The midfielder, who missed most of last season recovering from a major knee injury, limped off in the first half of City's 1-0 win over Brentford on October 5, and then withdrew from the Spain squad ahead of the international break.

"No news. He (Rodri) is not ready for tomorrow," Guardiola told reporters on Friday.

"I don't know when he will be back."

City is fifth, three points off leaders Arsenal after seven games, with Everton a further two points back in eighth.

Guardiola did have some good news with the return of full-back Rayan Ait-Nouri and forward Omar Marmoush to full training. Neither has featured since the end of August due to injuries.

"Much, much better, they are close to coming back," he said.

Midfielder Mateo Kovacic could feature for the first time since Achilles tendon surgery last season after he played for Croatia in their World Cup qualifying win over Gibraltar.

"He needs to give us quality moments, quality time, and quality minutes. Step-by-step, but it's important he's back," Guardiola said. —*PTI*

RODRI PHOTO: X/@RODRI

ICC WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Pak aim to spoil NZ's hopes

COLOMBO, 17 OCT

Already out of contention, a winless Pakistan will aim to play party poopers and dent New Zealand's hopes of reaching the semifinals when the two sides clash in the ICC Women's World Cup here on Saturday.

Pakistan were left ruing missed chances as their previous match against England was washed out due to rain.

The Asian side had done well to restrict England to 133 for nine in a rain-curtailed 31-over match, and were cruising at 34 for no loss in 6.4 overs in a revised chase of 113 before rain returned to end proceedings prematurely.

The washout denied Pakistan a potential win and left them languishing at the bottom of the table with three losses and one no-result from four games.

New Zealand, champions in 2000, are just outside the top four with three points from as many games.

Pakistan vs New Zealand Match starts at 3.00 pm IST

After suffering back-to-back defeats to Australia and South Africa, they bounced back with a crucial win over Bangladesh. However, their progress was halted again by rain in the abandoned match against Sri Lanka. —*PTI*

Satwik-Chirag enter semis

ODENSE, 17 OCT

The star Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty advanced to the semifinals of the Denmark Open after fighting past Muhammad Rian Ardianto and Rahmat Hidayat of Indonesia in the Super 750 badminton tournament here on Friday.

Satwik and Chirag, seeded sixth in the tournament, defeated the unseeded Indonesians 21-15, 18-2,1, 21-16 in a hard-fought quarterfinal that lasted 65 minutes.

Satwik-Chirag combination had defeated Scotland's Christopher Grimley and Matthew Grimley. —*PTI*

India beat Malaysia 2-1 to enter Sultan of Johor Cup final

JOHOR BAHRU, 17 OCT

India defeated hosts Malaysia 2-1 in their last group game to progress to the final of the Sultan of Johor Cup junior men's hockey tournament here on Friday.

India converted two penalty corners through Gurjot Singh (22nd minute) and Sourabh Anand Kushwaha (48th) to secure the win and set up a summit clash against Australia on Saturday.

Malaysia's goal was scored by Naaveenesh Panicker in the 43rd minute.

It was India's record eighth final at the Sultan of Johor Cup out of 12 appearances.

Both teams were sloppy to start off as they found the wet conditions difficult to negotiate after the match started late due to rain.

Initially, India tried to catch Malaysia off guard through long aerial balls, but the ploy didn't pay much dividends.

With the pitch becoming better, India started the second quarter on an aggressive note and won two back-to-back penalty corners. They came close to taking the lead on one occasion but were denied first by Malaysian goalkeeper Haziq Hairul and then by the crossbar from Araijeet Hundal's rebound hit. —*PTI*

BWF WORLD JUNIOR C'SHIPS

Tanvi seals maiden medal, Hooda misses out

GUWAHATI, 17 OCT

Top seed Tanvi Sharma assured India of a medal at the BWF World Junior Championships after advancing to the women's singles semifinals with a thrilling three-game win over Japan's Saki Matsumoto here on Friday.

The 16-year-old Sharma, who was a finalist at the US Open Super 300 earlier this year, recovered from a game down to beat left-handed Matsumoto 13-15, 15-9, 15-10 in a hard-fought quarterfinal contest.

However, eighth seed Unnati Hooda, the youngest Indian to win a Super 100 title at the 2022 Odisha Open and a member of India's 2022 Uber Cup squad, bowed out after going down 12-15, 13-15 to second seed Anyapat Phichitphon of Thailand in a 32-minute quarterfinal, missing out on a medal.

India's mixed doubles pair of Bhavya Chhabra and Vishakha Toppo also ended their campaign in the last-eight stage, losing 9-15, 7-15 to the Chinese Taipei duo of Hung Bing Fu and Chou Yun An.

In her quarterfinal, Tanvi started strong in the opening game, establishing a 10-6 lead. However, a string of unforced errors, including a judgment misstep at the baseline and two consecutive net errors. —*PTI*

TANVI SHARMA PHOTO: PTI

INDIAN GIRLS TO WIN SINGLES MEDAL

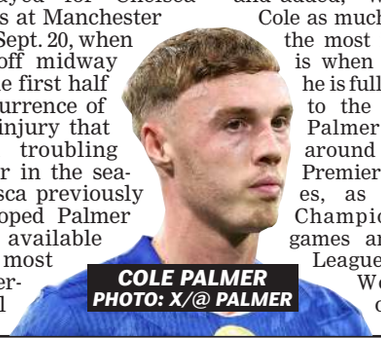
- **Aparna Popat** - Silver (1996, Silkeborg)
- **Saina Nehwal** - Silver (2006, Incheon)
- **Saina Nehwal** - Gold (2008, Pune)
- **Tanvi Sharma** - Bronze (2025, Guwahati)

Cole Palmer faces 6 weeks out due to injury

LONDON, 17 OCT

Chelsea playmaker Cole Palmer is set to be out for a further six weeks because of his ongoing groin problems, manager Enzo Maresca said Friday.

The England international hasn't played for Chelsea since a loss at Manchester United on Sept. 20, when he came off midway through the first half with a recurrence of the groin injury that had been troubling him earlier in the season. Maresca previously said he hoped Palmer would be available after the most recent international break, but speaking ahead of Chelsea's Premier League match at Nottingham Forest on Saturday, he said: "I was wrong. Unfortunately, he needs to be out for probably six more weeks. So, this is the update." Maresca said Palmer does not require groin surgery and added, "We try to protect Cole as much as we can, and the most important thing is when he comes back, he is fully fit." According to the new timescale, Palmer could miss around six or seven Premier League matches, as well as three Champions League games and the English League Cup trip to Wolverhampton on 29 Oct. —*PTI*



COLE PALMER PHOTO: X/@ PALMER